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THE LIFE OF PRAYER IN A WORLD OF SCIENCE

THE LIFE OF PRAYER IN A WORLD OF SCIENCE

BY

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CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY IN OUTLINE

THE CHURCH IN AMERICA, ETC.

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TO

MY FELLOW STUDENTS
IN
THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER

This book has been written by one who believes that prayer is the heart of all vital religion; yet in his own experience has often found it hard to pray. It tells the story of the way in which he has found help in his difficulties, and won the assurance that in this world which modern science has so enlarged and transformed, no less than in the simpler world of our fathers, prayer opens the door to communion with the living God whose creative Spirit can make the weak strong, the sad happy, the sinful righteous, and the old young.

PREFACE

The material contained in the following pages has been tested in various ways: partly in courses given to my own students in successive years; partly in lectures given to groups of ministers, some six hundred in all, at Galesburg, Illinois, at Hampton, Virginia, and at the Union Theological Seminary in New York; partly through practical experiment in private and social worship. With the exception of a few paragraphs which appeared in an article in *The North American Review* for September, 1926, and are here reproduced through the courtesy of the editor, no part of the material has appeared in print.

I wish to express my thanks to my assistant, the Reverend Henry P. Van Dusen, who has read the proof and has made many helpful suggestions. Professor Gardner Murphy of Columbia University has rendered me a similar service in connection with the second chapter. To my friend and former student, Miss Helen F. Dunbar, I am indebted for help in compiling the relevant bibliographical material. The most important books from which I have derived instruction and inspiration have been mentioned in the notes and in the appendix which follows. But there are many persons whom it is impossible for me to name, to whom I owe much. If these words should chance to fall under the eyes of any of these, I trust that they will take them as the expression of an appreciation none the less sincere because not formally expressed.

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I

THE REDISCOVERY OF PRAYER

1. By Way of Introduction
2. The Loss of the Habit of Prayer
3. The Rediscovery of the Inner Life
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5. Obstacles to Be Overcome
6. Guiding Principles

1. By Way of Introduction

The man who would write about prayer in this busy age must have a good reason. For he is dealing with a subject of all others the most intimate and the most familiar. There are only two reasons that can justify him in the undertaking. One is that he has learned something new about prayer that no one else has as yet discovered; the other is that he has rediscovered something old which, in the hurry and confusion of our busy life, has somehow been lost sight of. In our contact with the greatest realities, novelty comes to most of us, if at all, by way of our appreciations, and in prayer we are concerned with the greatest of all realities. Prayer is the name we give to the practice of the presence of God. No one can write of it fittingly who is not conscious of the greatness of the theme and keenly alive to its difficulties.

There is, first of all, the difficulty of preoccupation. Prayer, to be effective, requires detachment. One must exchange the acquisitive for the receptive spirit. One must stop doing things and be still. When we are in a hurry it is all but impossible for us to pray. But in our busy, energetic age quiet seems a lost art. St. Ignatius required of those who would take his "Spiritual Exercises" thirty days of unbroken concentration. How many of us find it possible to give to the inner life so much as thirty minutes?

Then there is the obstacle of distance. I do not mean the separation that is measured by miles, but

the inner gulf that divides spirit from spirit. Who of us knows what really goes on in the people who are nearest to us? Who of us knows accurately even what goes on within himself? Intimate though we seem, there is a side of life in which we are strangers to one another—strangers often even to ourselves. Yet it is in this inner, undiscovered country that prayer has its home. How can one speak to another of this most intimate of all experiences with any hope that he will say the right word?

More baffling still is the difficulty of the theme itself. It is difficult because prayer is at once the most simple and the most inclusive of all human experiences. We have called it the practice of the presence of God. It is the out-reaching of the human spirit to that which is without and above—the instinctive cry of man for some reality that shall satisfy his deepest longings and embody his highest ideals. But what that highest is and where it is to be found, or how we shall recognize it when we have found it —these are questions on which the wisest philosophers have pondered for centuries, only to find themselves in hopeless divergence. How can one expect to bring light where there is so much confusion; certainty where so many are in doubt?

Under such conditions there is only one safe method to follow. One must abandon all pretense of posing as an authority and be content simply to record the insights that have come to him in the course of his own experience. This is the more reasonable, since no one of us is simply an isolated individual. Each of us reflects the conditions of the environment in which he lives and perpetuates the antecedents which have made him what he is. Hence, if one speaks frankly of what seems important to

him, he has the best chance of interesting others who have come out of like antecedents and are played upon by similar influences. The difficulties that perplex him, they will be likely to feel, and the suggestions that have helped him may appeal to them as worthy of consideration.

In this spirit I take up my pen. I write not as an expert who has mastered the theory of prayer, but as one who, realizing fully the difficulties which keep many from praying, desires to talk over with those who would like to pray if they could, some principles which have made prayer easier and more satisfying to him.

2. The Loss of the Habit of Prayer

One of the outstanding facts in the religious life of our generation has been the decline in the practice of prayer. Evidences of this decline are so numerous that it is not necessary to give specifications. I need only refer to the infrequency, and in some cases the almost complete abandonment, of the prayer-meeting; to the growing discontinuance of the practice of family worship; to the decay of the habit of personal devotion even in the lives of persons who still continue to be active supporters of the church and sincere believers in the truths of religion. These things are significant not so much for their own sake—for the history of religion is full of changes of habit—but because of the side-lights which they shed upon the character of contemporary religious experience. The vivid sense of God as a determining factor in daily life, which was characteristic of an older piety, seems strange to many of the earnest young people of our day. When we read

such a book as William Law's "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," and realize what a keen delight he took in his hours of personal devotion; when we remember that Luther, during a particularly strenuous period of his life, was accustomed to spend three hours a day in prayer,[1] we feel that we are moving in a different world, and we ask ourselves what is the meaning of the change, and what are to be its consequences for our own lives and for the life of the church.

It is not hard to understand how the change has come about. In part it is due to the critical spirit which for many people has undermined the presuppositions of prayer in its older form; in part it is due to the keen social interest which has led others to react against the selfishness and superficiality of much of the older individualistic religion; in part it is due to the breakdown of the home which is the result of the increased mobility of modern life; most of all it is due to that mobility itself, the restless, change-loving spirit that is never happy unless it is in motion, that can find nothing stable on which to rest, nothing certain on which to rely.

A recent number of *The Atlantic Monthly* contained two articles about prayer.[2] One was by a theological professor who brought to his subject all the technique of the scholar; the other by a professor of English whose reason for writing was the fact that having rediscovered the art of prayer for himself, he could not rest till he had shared his discovery with others.

Kirsopp Lake begins by telling us what prayer has

[1] *Cf.* the letter of Dietrich Veit, quoted in Melanchthon's "Collected Works" (Opera, ed. Bretschneider, vol. II, 1835, pp. 158, 159).

[2] August, 1924, pp. 163–172. The substance of the following four paragraphs is taken from an article in *The North American Review* for September–November, 1926, entitled "After Fundamentalism—What?"

meant to praying people in the past, and then goes on to explain why it cannot mean the same thing to us who are living to-day. Prayer, to our fathers, was primarily petition, the process by which God "was induced to do otherwise than he would have done if prayer had not been used." [1] But modern science, with its clearer revelation of the laws of life, has made this view no longer possible to modern men. Professor Lake concludes with a forecast of what prayer will be like in the future when it has been stripped of all its superstitious elements and reduced to its simplest form as communion and aspiration, leaving it to the professional psychologists to determine whether the being with which we commune and after which we aspire is "some external power" or only "some part of our own nature which is ordinarily submerged." [2]

Glenn Clark writes in a very different spirit. He brushes all theoretical difficulties aside in face of the one fact that matters for him, the fact that since he has rediscovered the art of prayer, his entire life has been transformed. For the past two years, he tells us, God has blessed him "with an almost continuous stream of answered prayer. Some of the answers were marvellous, many unexplainable, all of them joy-giving." [3] What has happened to him he dares to hope may happen to others who are willing to repeat his experiment, and he proceeds to outline a series of simple rules which he has found helpful in the conduct of his own devotion.

The contrast between these two articles measures the distance between our own generation and the generation which preceded it. We live in an age in which large numbers of people have been exchang-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 163. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 166. [3] *Op. cit.*, p. 167.

ing the attitude of Glenn Clark for that of Kirsopp Lake. Where our fathers and mothers prayed, we philosophize about prayer. We have ceased to be participants and have become critics of religion, and in the process something has dropped out which has left a gap which for many of us has not yet been filled.

There are people who assure us that we have gained more than we have lost by the change. They tell us that the type of worship which our fathers practised was essentially selfish. It diverted attention from the social tasks which are our common concern to the moods and fancies of the individual. It fostered resignation. It made men content with the *status quo*. But the world we live in is a world full of tasks to be accomplished, of wrongs to be righted. If we are to believe in God at all, these persons insist, he must be one who expresses the ideals of our democratic age, a comrade to be helped, a leader to be imitated, not a master to be obeyed or an idol to be worshipped. What we have lost in reverence and submission, we are assured, is more than compensated for by our gain in sincerity and self-reliance.

It is not denied that in the past prayer fulfilled a useful function in meeting personal needs and correcting personal faults. But we are encouraged to believe that the science which has been so helpful to us in our social tasks will prove not less resourceful in meeting our individual necessities. In bringing the inner life under law, psychology, we are reminded, is pointing the way to the correction of our most persistent personal failings. What the old-time pastor or priest tried to do by rule of thumb the modern psychologist is attempting by scientific methods.

He is unravelling the structure of our inner life, discovering the unsuspected complexes that thwart and limit us, and so pointing the way to freedom and health.

So we find many of our contemporaries solacing themselves for their loss of prayer by substitutes, psychological or social, which they recommend to us as equally good if not better.

3. The Rediscovery of the Inner Life

Yet there are signs that beneath these surface movements a current is beginning to set in the other direction. In widely different quarters we find a renewed interest in the inner life. People's thoughts are turning again to prayer, or, if this be too much to say, at least to the more intimate and personal aspects of religion. A significant sign of the times is the increased market for religious literature. Books on mysticism appear in the publishers' catalogues with increasing frequency. We recall the warm welcome given to William James's Gifford Lectures on the "Varieties of the Religious Experience," but that was a book written in fascinating English by a man who had already an international reputation. More significant is the recent success of Professor Otto's book on "The Idea of the Holy," [1] a book which in spite of the high cost of printing has already gone through many editions in Germany, and has been widely sold in its English translation. The characteristic thing about Otto's book is its emphasis upon the transcendent element in religion. He protests against the prevailing tendency to rationalize the religious life. Religion, he tells us, is some-

[1] Eng. tr. by Harvey (London, 1923).

thing *sui generis*. It is man's response to the ultimate mystery. Awe and reverence are of its essence. Without the sense of the supernatural it cannot live.

This increasing sensitiveness to the value of supernatural religion accounts in part for the rapid spread of the Anglo-Catholic movement, a phenomenon which, in view of some of its manifestations, might otherwise seem surprising. Thoughtful people of all the churches are asking for a service in which devotion, as distinct from instruction, shall be central. Weary of criticism and of controversy, worshippers are turning for their spiritual food to the solemn language of ritual. Attendance at early communion is growing. A Presbyterian clergyman reports the attendance of more than a hundred and fifty persons at a single early morning celebration in Holy Week. In Congregational circles too we find increasing appreciation of the contribution of the sacrament to personal religion.

This growing hunger for God is making itself felt outside the church. There was a time not so long ago when Christian Science was the natural refuge of those who found no satisfaction for their religious needs in the more conservative churches. But now it is but one of many rivals. Theosophy, New Thought, Spiritualism, and the latest substitute for traditional religion, psychoanalysis, all have their votaries. The hotel parlors in our large cities are crowded every Sunday morning with throngs of people who find in these new cults the satisfaction for some inner need.

Still another straw which shows how the wind is blowing is the increased attention being given to worship in student circles. Among the reasons given the writer for dissatisfaction with required chapel at

one of our large Eastern universities was that the existing service did not make adequate provision for the students' need of worship. Both in Great Britain and the United States books of devotion are appearing from the presses of the Christian Associations. Prayer, it would appear, is becoming again a subject of living interest to the younger generation.

I have quoted *The Atlantic Monthly* for evidence of the decline of prayer. Let me turn to it again for evidence of the growing longing for that which prayer alone can supply.

In a revealing article[1] by one who styles himself a modernist, the writer tells us the story of his progressive disillusionment with contemporary religion. One by one he has followed the paths opened to him by the modern spirit, only to find them ending in a cul-de-sac. Biblical criticism, the new theology, the social gospel, he has tried them all and come back empty-handed.

He is not alone in this failure, he tells us. He finds himself one of a multitude of seekers looking for something which they have not found. He quotes the experience of one of them, a man whom he had long respected for his sincerity, devotion, and spiritual insight, who recently came to him to tell him of a dream. "I thought," he said, "that I saw you standing on a hilltop, and we, a great host of us, were crowded around waiting eagerly for what you might say. We could see your lips framing the word, but no sound came out of your mouth. We tried to help you by calling out the word your lips were shaping; but we also were dumb; and that word was God." [2]

[1] "The Modernist's Quest for God," February, 1926, pp. 228–233. (The following three paragraphs are taken from the article in *The North American Review* already referred to, *cf.* p. 6, note 2.)

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 228.

There are many reasons for this change of mood. Some of them will concern us as we proceed. But one cause lies on the surface. It is the breakdown of the high expectation which the social movement had aroused in many to whom, when it was first proclaimed, it brought the enthusiasm of a new Gospel. There was a time, only a short dozen years ago, when it seemed to many earnest people as if a radical social transformation were imminent. The plans for the new social order were already drawn; the foundations were laid. All that seemed needed was enough willing hands to build the superstructure. To-day how different the outlook! The war has come and gone and as its aftermath has left a host of ugly shapes that mock our hope of a better world. All the old selfishnesses and prejudices of which we hoped that we were rid forever are with us still. The failure—at least the indefinite postponement—of the social hope has raised again the whole question of personal religion, and given a new meaning to that ancient word which so many of our contemporaries have for the time lost out of their vocabulary—the word "God."

In the light of experiences such as this, it is not hard to appreciate the mood of wistfulness which is so characteristic of our time, or to understand why the thoughts of so many persons all about us are turning longingly to the life within in quest of some new light which shall illuminate the darkness from which otherwise they see no hope of deliverance.

There is hope in this situation, but there is also danger, the danger that in our effort to escape from the *impasse* in which we find ourselves we shall take refuge in some easy solution which ignores the lessons of the past. One can understand the motives

which lead many in our day, weary of the negations of much so-called modernism, to turn their backs upon criticism and fall back upon some form of authoritative religion. One can understand the relief with which those who have been carrying on their own shoulders the burden of the world's suffering and sin persuade themselves that in the last analysis the responsibility is not theirs, but God's; and, abandoning for the present the hope of any radical social betterment, turn inward for the peace they seek in vain without. But such a shifting of responsibility promises only temporary relief; the old difficulties remain and must be faced, if not by us, at least by our children. The lessons already learned are true, even if they are not all the truth. The life within is not a substitute for the life without; rather it is the power-house where we gain strength for fresh endeavor, the lamp by the light of which we are guided to new discovery. Our way lies forward, not back. Not back from science to faith, but forward through science to a more assured and more satisfying faith. Not back from service to prayer, but forward through prayer to a more effective and enduring service.

4. The Fourfold Function of Prayer

By prayer, in what follows, we shall understand those activities, experiences, and habits through which we make explicit to consciousness, and so a determining factor in our conduct, the relationship in which we stand to God all the time.

Four things prayer can do for us, any one of which would justify the central place which has been given to it in the religious life of the past: It can open our

eyes to the beauty and wonder of the world in which we live. It can introduce us into a fellowship more intimate and satisfying than any human friendship. It can furnish us with supplies of energy which will reinforce our limited powers and make us adequate to meet whatever strain the day may bring. It can keep us true to our best selves, by holding ever before our eyes the man or woman we were meant to be. These effects correspond to four aspects of the life of prayer which are often confused, but which we shall find it helpful to distinguish.

In the first place, prayer is appreciation. It puts us in the mood where we perceive the beauty and wonder of the world in which we are living, and yield ourselves up to their contemplation in reverence and thanksgiving. We have called prayer the practice of the presence of God. God is the name which sums up for the worshipper all that is most adorable and satisfying in the universe—power, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, mercy, understanding, love. To pray is to realize what it may mean for our life and for the life of the world that there is such a God as Jesus called Father, and to find the whole world transfigured through the joy of the discovery.

In the next place, prayer is fellowship. In prayer we not only contemplate God; we speak to him and he answers us. Not in words that the physical ear can hear, but in ways none the less recognizable to the discerning spirit, he assures us that we are not alone in his universe. The beauty that thrills us, the ever-changing life by which we are surrounded, are but the garment in which the eternal has clothed himself that he may make his presence manifest to the finite children who could not bear to see him face to face.

Again, prayer is creativity. It is not only communion, but renewal; not only intercourse, but recreation. We come to God in our weakness to be made strong; in our ignorance to be made wise; in our sickness to be made well; in our sorrow to be made happy; in our sin to be made righteous; and what we need we receive, if only we come in the right spirit and dare to believe that we may have the thing for which we ask.

Finally, prayer is discipline. It is the school in which we fit ourselves for service by the practice of the presence of God. All turns here on the word practice. There is something for us to do as well as to receive. Prayer is not only the altar where we ask God for what we need. It is the judgment-seat to which we bring what we have made out of what he has given us, that he may test it by his own divine ideal. In the school of prayer we discover our shortcomings, and in renewed consecration rededicate ourselves to the cause of Christ.

Our subject takes us into the very heart of the religious life. Prayer is the point of departure from which all the fundamental problems of religion can rightly be approached. To live the life of prayer in a world of science is to gain a vantage-ground from which all the questions that now divide us can be studied with the brightest hope of a satisfactory solution.

5. Obstacles to Be Overcome

A word first as to the obstacles that make prayer difficult. They are the familiar foes of vital religion in every age—laziness, selfishness, inattention, carelessness—all the things that make us live for our-

selves rather than for others, for our baser instead of for our better self, for the present instead of for the future and for eternity. Whatever makes it hard to believe in God as a present beneficent reality, actually functioning in human life, as self-indulgence always makes it hard, is an obstacle to prayer.

But it is not these familiar difficulties that I have primarily in mind now. There are special obstacles characteristic of our time which make prayer more than ordinarily difficult for many people. These we must now examine with some care.

I have called my subject "The Life of Prayer in a World of Science." In many ways science has transformed our world and in the process put obstacles in the way of our praying. These are of two kinds, those that make us feel that prayer is unnecessary, and those that make us feel that it is impossible. They correspond to the two forms in which science meets us, as applied and as pure—a set of tools and a habit of mind. Each bears upon the matter of our present concern and makes it necessary for us to reconsider our previous ideas of what it means to pray.

(1) And first of science as applied. Science has done many wonderful things for us. It has built engines which enable us to race over the earth, steamboats which carry us swiftly across the water, airplanes by which we can fly like the birds, factories in which one man can do the work of a thousand, radio through which one man can speak to millions. But all the specific things that science has done can be summed up in the one sentence that it has transformed a static into a fluid universe. The world of a generation ago was a stable world, a world in which what happened yesterday could be expected to happen to-morrow, a world with a fixed

status for the individual, definite classes in society, particular governments to which men owed allegiance, an inerrant Bible, an infallible church. There was change, to be sure, but it took place slowly, so slowly that its significance was hardly perceived. But modern science has enormously accelerated the rate of change and forced its occurrence upon us. It has made changes seem possible on a world-wide scale, and given man powers of which he had not dreamed. In politics it has evoked what we call the democratic consciousness; in religion it has made us familiar with the idea of a progressive and self-governing church. We are not satisfied with the church as it is to-day. We see new possibilities, as yet unrealized, almost undreamed of, and from many different centres we are trying experiments which point the way to something better.

But the older forms of worship provide no adequate expression for this new democratic consciousness. The religion of our fathers, as we have seen, preached acceptance, content, submission to the *status quo*. To-day we are urged to cultivate dissatisfaction, revolt, discontent. So the social movement, coming in conflict with the habits of the church, has become largely, if not altogether, divorced from organized religion, and many, finding no spiritual satisfaction in the forms of prayer as they are now practised in the churches, have come to feel that prayer is superfluous, if not positively harmful. Add to this the change in outward habits, the breakdown of the family, the increase in the number of those who feel no responsibility for regular church attendance, the growing restlessness and love of excitement, and it is not strange that for many prayer should have become a lost art.

Nor is it simply that the object for which we are

asked to pray no longer fits in with our present mood, but prayer itself seems often no longer necessary. The things for which our fathers turned to God for help are now seen to be largely in our own control. It is not simply that nature is fluid, but that you and I can control the channels in which her currents are to flow. Where our fathers went into their closets to pray, we go into our laboratories to experiment and into our factories to create. When the drought came they prayed for rain. We replant the denuded mountain slopes, and the rain comes. When pestilence threatened, they cried to God for healing. We diagnose the cause of the disease and apply the appropriate remedy. Thus slowly but surely man's control over nature is increasing, and his need for prayer, in the older sense of that term, has grown correspondingly less.

(2) But the cause of the difficulty lies deeper still. It grows out of the critical temper of which science is born. Prayer begins when we take God for granted, but science takes nothing for granted, at least not at first, or until verified by repeated experiment. Our historians and critics have been testing the accepted notions of God and religion, and they have found much to reject, still more to question. The Bible pictures God as an individual dealing with other individuals and shaping the course of history and human life according to his good pleasure. Theology has developed this into a theory of the supernatural which makes it a world above and apart from nature, beyond the control of science, yet known to man immediately in experience. The churches have differed in the details of their conception of this supernatural realm. In principle they have agreed, and the God to whom they have prayed has been conceived in terms of arbitrary and incalculable will.

But science knows no such world of the unpredictable, and for multitudes its loss has meant the end of prayer.

At first the controversy was about matters more or less external, the Bible, the church, even the person of Jesus Christ. The inner life remained untouched. Here at least one could meet God even if all other props were shaken. But science has not been content to stop here. It has invaded the inner life and brought it too under law. It has shown us that our subjective states are just as much facts to be studied as the order of an historical sequence or the rise and fall of the tides.

The psychologists have been dissecting the inner life as the botanist dissects a flower, and they have found no convincing evidence of the soul. One school much in evidence to-day—the Behaviorists—goes further in its negation, and regards consciousness itself as an incident in a process which can be adequately explained without it. What science discovers, it tells us, is a series of activities, succeeding one another as parts of one unbroken process which is itself conditioned at every point by the physical organism with which it is associated, and by which its manifestations are determined. So prayer is resolved into auto-suggestion, and God becomes a by-product of man's changing emotional moods, a projection of his aspirations into the void, a dream picture screened on nothingness.

Here again it is not so much the assured results of science that are fatal to prayer as the temper of mind that it often generates, the questioning, critical attitude that takes nothing for granted; that substitutes the religion of the quest for the religion that has found.

And yet, in spite of the difficulties, inward and

outward, mankind keeps on praying. Not always easily, not always with a good conscience; still in moments of crisis and of tragedy the old longing makes itself felt, and the old cry breaks out: Oh, that I might find him!

What shall we think of this impulse to pray? Two possibilities are open to us. Either we may regard it as an unmeaning survival of which the sensible man will rid himself with the least possible delay; or we may see in it the witness to an unsuspected presence whose method of revealing himself we have not yet adequately fathomed.

As one who has felt to the full the difficulties which science puts in the way of prayer, I desire to give my reasons for adopting the second of these alternatives.

6. Guiding Principles

Three discoveries helped to confirm me in the conviction that in prayer we have to do with the self-revealing God—discoveries made by multitudes of simple souls before me, but which came to me, as all personal discoveries come, with the freshness of a surprise. The first was the discovery that to recover the lost sense of reality in prayer one must have done once for all with the idea that prayer is a duty, and realize it for what it is, an unspeakable privilege.

In saying that to recover the lost sense of reality in prayer one must have done once and for all with the idea that prayer is a duty, I do not mean, of course, that prayer is not a duty. If by duty we understand the content of the moral ideal, the goal after which we ought to strive, the standard that defines the perfect and complete life, then prayer is the duty of duties. But the fact remains that we

can *realize* what it means even as a duty only as we cease to think of it as a duty and appreciate it as a privilege. For it is only as we do this that we can rid ourselves of the sense of strain which so often accompanies the use of the traditional rules as to times and forms, and makes them obstacles instead of the helps they were meant to be. Prayer, to be effective, must be free, the spontaneous outgoing of the personality to something without and above, which is felt to be supremely worthy.

It is of course true that the practice of prayer as a duty has important uses. Like all rules imposed from without, it may serve an indispensable purpose in forming habits which at a later time will assist spontaneous devotion, and remind us of ideals which we might otherwise forget. To pray when there is no inner response may be a useful discipline, just as the faithful practice of the daily dozen when one is tired may start the blood circulating and hasten the time when exercise will be pleasant instead of irksome. The fact remains that such temporary employment of a lower and less adequate form of devotion must never be accepted as a substitute for the spontaneous outgoing of the spirit, which alone is worthy of the name of prayer. If prayer has come to mean duty, and only duty, it may be better to stop praying altogether for a time till the need awakes which transforms prayer into privilege.

This change from the thought of prayer as duty to that of prayer as privilege is only the application to this particular phase of the Christian experience of the central principle of Protestantism, that of the autonomy of the human spirit. The Reformers perceived that we serve God rightly only when we serve him freely. This insight they formulated as the doc-

trine of justification by faith. Like the apostle from whom they took over the doctrine, they had learned in their own experience that we become our own best selves only as we surrender ourselves completely to some one greater than ourselves. Jesus expressed the same truth more simply in his teaching concerning the childlike spirit. "Unless ye turn and become as little children," he said—or, as we might paraphrase it—unless you stop worrying and become simple and trustful again, "ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." [1]

We shall consider presently what this insight means for the technique of prayer. Here it is sufficient to note that it points the way to the right use of all rules, for it shows us that it is only as we discover the spiritual significance of law, and willingly accept it as the God-given guide to our present life, that it can do for us what it was meant to do.

Another insight that helped to remove the sense of unreality from prayer was the discovery that we can make effective use of the helps which come to us through others' experience of God only as each one of us has the courage to approach God by himself.

Jesus is our authority for this principle. No one has emphasized the solitude of the soul in prayer as he has done. "When ye pray," he said to his disciples, "ye shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of streets that they may be seen of men. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." [2] And again: "If any man

[1] Matt. 18:3.

[2] Matt. 6:6.

come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."[1] These are among the hardest sayings of Jesus, and they are hard because they are so true. They express Jesus' view of the independence of the individual personality, the inherent worth that every human being has in God's sight, the responsibility to God which he can share with no other. Others may tell us about God. In the last analysis each one of us must approach God alone.

It is easy to misunderstand this principle. It has been used to justify the solitary life, as though personality were a sacred enclosure, into the secrecy of which none other should be allowed to pry. That is a monastic perversion of Jesus' teaching. The privacy he recommends is not a substitute for fellowship, but a preparation for it. Fellowship is sharing, and the more you are, the more you have to share. But no one can measure what he really is, still less what he may become, till he draws apart from others and enters the secret place where God and he are alone. The danger of all human fellowship is that it will set limits to growth. We accept so easily the standards of our environment. It costs so much to break with the judgment of those we admire and love, that it is easy for us to surrender our conscience into others' keeping and become blind to the hidden possibilities which God has planted within us, not for our own sake merely, but for others' sake as well. Unless one dares to be true to the best in himself at any cost, even if that cost be the surrender of the dearest of human relationships, he cannot know what life at its finest can be. This, I take it, is what Pro-

[1] Luke 14:26.

fessor Whitehead has in mind when he speaks of the solitariness of religion.[1]

And the principle works both ways. It is not only necessary for me to be alone that I may learn what I have to give. It is no less necessary for me to be alone that I may learn what it is my privilege to receive. Only as one discovers in his own experience the infinite values of human nature is he in a position to realize the potentialities in other persons and understand what is finest in their lives. The truest fellowship is possible only between persons each of whom has learned to be alone.

Independence, then, is not a substitute for fellowship, but its pre-condition. If we enter into our closet to be alone with God it is not that we should stay there permanently, but that we may come out with conviction deepened and strength renewed to take our place in the world of men and share with others work which apart from such secret reinforcement neither we nor they alone could do.

I come to my third and last discovery, one which it is difficult to put into words. Let me call it the discovery that God is inexhaustible. I learned—it seems an obvious thing to say, but as we shall see, it carries with it far-reaching theoretical consequences—I learned that in order truly to find God in the world of to-day, this present world of daily experience, we must realize that he is never completely contained in any particular experience. He is so great that he is greater than all his revelations, greater than the Bible, greater than the church,

[1] "Religion in the Making" (New York, 1926), p. 47: "The great rational religions are the outcome of the emergence of a religious consciousness which is universal, as distinguished from tribal, or even social. Because it is universal, it introduces the note of solitariness. Religion is what the individual does with his solitariness."

greater than the human Jesus. There is no place where God has revealed himself where you can stop and say: All of God is here. And yet the real God is truly revealed in all these experiences, and we may rest in confidence in his revelation. God is really present in our daily life. He is truly known as helper and friend and guide; but he is really found and truly known in the measure that we realize that what we know of him to-day is only the beginning of a larger and richer knowledge which is open to us as we leave the past behind us and press on toward the better future to which he is leading us. The true worshipper, Professor Bennett reminds us,[1] should have the spirit of the pioneer. "If worship is the thing I take it to be, then we should look to it to set a fresh and invigorating, if disturbing, air moving about our accepted standards. It should make for independence of mind; it should create that kind of rebel who is not only rebel but prophet as well."

It is not easy to realize this. The little that we know of God seems so precious that we grasp it as if it were the whole. We set up our narrow standards and build our protecting bulwarks to guard what we have won against the mutations of the years. And we forget that God is the living God, everywhere present, in the changing as in the permanent; in the future as in the past and in the present. To quote Professor Bennett again: "Worship can transform moral ambition by changing it from an effort to become something into an effort to express something; it substitutes creative inspiration for heroic resolve. And even if the love of God is an inspiration

[1] In a stimulating article in the *Journal of Religion*, vol. VI, September, 1926, p. 498.

which the worshipper can never wholly express, that need not cause him to despair; he can keep his soul in peace because he possesses securely that which he is forever trying to utter." [1]

Important theoretical consequences follow from this attitude of expectancy. It brings an insight which sheds light on many puzzles of philosophical theology, on the problem of transcendence and immanence, for example, or on that of nature and the supernatural. But to the man who has learned to pray it can be stated in very simple language. God is truly known in the present only when he is known as the God of the future also. However satisfying may have been his self-revelation in the past, he has still more wonderful things in store for those who put their trust in him.

These then are the three discoveries that have helped to make prayer real to me: the discovery that prayer is a privilege and not a duty; the discovery that rightly to use the helps that come to us through others' experience of God we must first learn to approach God alone; the discovery that God is truly known in present experience only as it is realized that he is too great to be completely contained in any particular experience. Each suggests a principle which may serve as a clew in our further thinking about prayer. The discovery that prayer is a privilege and not a duty gives us the principle of spontaneity. The discovery that rightly to use the helps that come to us through others' experience of God we must first learn to approach God alone, gives us the principle of independence. The discovery that God is truly known in present experience only as it is realized that he is too great to be com-

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 502, 503.

pletely contained in any particular experience, gives us the principle of expectancy.

Let us take these principles as guides in our further study. We shall ask, in the first place, what acquaintance with the laws of the inner life can do to recover the spontaneity which is the condition of all effective prayer. Here psychology will have help to give. We shall inquire, in the second place, how the principle of independence helps us to find new meanings in the prayers which have come down to us from the past. This will take us into the field of history. We shall ask, in the third place, what light the principle of expectancy sheds upon the theoretical puzzles which have made prayer difficult for so many. Philosophy will be our guide in this third step of our inquiry. In conclusion, we shall ask what education can do to cultivate the habits which make prayer effective. Each of these inquiries has its special contribution to make to the life of prayer. May we not hope that together they will help us to surmount the obstacles which now make prayer difficult for so many, and to re-enthrone it in its central place in the life of the spirit?

II

THE CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHOLOGY: PRAYER AS APPRECIATION

1. Where to Begin
2. What Theory Can Contribute to Practice
3. A Hint from Psychology. Piety as Unity
4. The Principle of Spontaneity
5. Consequences for Technique
6. Jesus as Our Teacher of Prayer

1. Where to Begin

In our first chapter we were reminded of the central importance of prayer for the religious life. We passed in review some of the obstacles which have made it difficult for many of our contemporaries to pray. We saw that in spite of these difficulties the impulse to pray still remains active, and there are indications from widely different quarters that the thoughts of many people are turning again to the inner life in the hope of finding there the satisfaction they have sought elsewhere in vain. It becomes important, therefore, to ask how we are to meet this new interest, and what help we can give the people who would like to pray but who do not know how to set about it. Clearly here is a subject that demands our best thinking, yet I do not know any field of similar importance to which Protestant thinkers have been devoting so little attention during the last generation.

The first step toward fruitful thinking about prayer would seem to be to acquaint oneself with the best that has been thought about it in the past. If our generation has thought little about prayer, this was certainly not true of our predecessors. The literature of the devotional life is voluminous, and there is scarcely any subject which interests us today but we shall find that some one who has preceded us has already made a significant contribution to it.

Unfortunately, it is not easy for us to take advantage of these helps that are ready to our hand,

for the language in which they are written and the ideas in which their thought moves are alike unfamiliar to many in our day.

Take, for example, that oldest and best known of all collections of prayers—the Psalms. How much they contain that seems unreal to the modern reader! I am not thinking simply of the naïve morality which some of the Psalms express: the prayer for vengeance against enemies; the confident appeal to Jehovah as the God of Israel rather than of Egypt or of Moab. I am not thinking of the description of the Messiah as an Oriental potentate receiving tribute from subject peoples; or of the frequent reference to animal sacrifice as a custom still persisting and acceptable to the deity. I have in mind rather the complete absence of any trace of intellectual difficulty; the address to Jehovah as a familiar friend, as intimately known as one's own father or mother. Between our critical, questioning mood and the simple faith of these primitive worshippers there lies the whole story of the rise of science with its extraordinary transformation of the world without and of the world within. And what is true of the Psalms is true to a greater or less extent of much of the devotional literature of the prescientific age.

There would seem, then, to be need of a different approach to our subject—an approach that shall frankly recognize the difficulties that prayer presents to the modern mind and address itself to them directly.

We have already considered these difficulties. They are of two kinds: those which make prayer seem unnecessary and those which make it seem impossible.

There is, first of all, the difficulty which grows out of the new conception of the world which physical science has given us. What room is there in our world of law, where effect follows cause in inexorable sequence, for the direct initiative of God which the saints take for granted? If there be a God at all, is it not reasonable to suppose that he has expressed himself adequately in the laws he has made? What ground have we, then, for thinking that our prayer can make any difference in his activity?

There is, in the second place, the difficulty which comes with the discovery that we ourselves, as well as the world we live in, are subject to law. As our physical acts are conditioned by the physical universe which surrounds us, so our thoughts and feelings, we now see, are determined by the influences, conscious and subconscious, which have made us what we are. What guaranty have we for our confidence that these fleeting states of ours bring us into touch with objective reality? Is not the presence in the mind of such an idea as God sufficiently accounted for by suggestion, either that of others or our own?

There is, in the third place, the difficulty which is presented by the different conceptions which men have formed of the deity. If there be a God who reveals himself in answer to our prayer, how comes it that his revelation has been so differently understood? Why has he not given us a single, consistent disclosure of his will, instead of the many conflicting accounts that meet us in the tradition of the different churches?

There is, in the fourth place, the difficulty which grows out of the contrast between the older introspective piety and the prevailing social emphasis. With or without reason, many of our contemporaries

feel that there is something selfish about the life of devotion as it was practised by the saints. What the world needs, it is said, is not so much worshippers as workers, and, if need be, fighters—men who look out and not in, and find their happiness in practical helpfulness.

All these are theoretical difficulties—philosophical, historical, ethical, as the case may be. Even more urgent is the practical difficulty, which grows out of the extraordinary complexity of our interests—the fact that it has become for many of us all but impossible to command the quiet which in the past has been the indispensable condition of effective worship.

This difficulty is not physical simply, due to conditions of time and space. It is even more psychological. We are living in a world that has lost the habit of prayer, and we tend unconsciously to reflect the conditions of the environment in which we are living. It is not simply that it is hard to pray. It is hard to *want* to pray. And unless we can recover that lost desire, we shall make little headway against the difficulties of the mind.

Interwoven with all these influences—in part their result, in part their cause—is the lost sense of the presence of the deity. If only we could see God as we can see our human friends; if only we could touch him as we touch the solid earth on which we stand; we might recover our lost power of prayer. But the old sense of nearness and certainty has gone. God has become an ideal, an hypothesis, something with which our minds may play, something after which our hearts may aspire, but no longer an assured possession; the refuge and support upon which our lives are built.

It is to this major difficulty that we must address ourselves.

2. What Theory Can Contribute to Practice

As our chief need is to recover our lost sense of God, it would seem natural, first of all, to address ourselves to the theoretical difficulties which make it hard to believe in God.

Thus we may remind ourselves that if there be a God who reveals himself to man, as religion assumes there is, the way we call prayer would be a natural way for his revelation to come. We know that our own thoughts and feelings are inwardly determined, yet this knowledge does not affect our conviction that we have genuine relationships with other human beings. Why, then, should the discovery that God works through law lead us to doubt that a genuine self-disclosure of his will is possible? If a belief in determinism is inconsistent with personal initiative and fellowship, then all that we can say is that some highly intelligent men have lived all their lives without finding it out. Oliver Cromwell believed that everything that happened was determined by God from the beginning, but that did not make prayer any less real to him, or lessen his sense of personal responsibility for beating the Cavaliers whom he regarded as the enemies of God. Determinism and freedom are not necessarily inconsistent.[1] World of

[1] We have assumed, for the sake of argument, that science shuts us up to a deterministic view of the universe. But it is only fair to point out that many philosophers do not believe this. William James is but one of a long line of thinkers whose observations of life have convinced them that contingency—in the literal sense of that term—is still a factor to be reckoned with. It is not necessary for our present purpose to determine which party in this age-long debate is in the right.

law though it be, ours is a universe in which new things are constantly coming to pass. With man creation is a familiar experience. In countless ways we fashion the raw material of our world after patterns which our minds conceive. Why, then, should we conclude that man alone possesses this capacity? Shall the power that produced man be less resourceful than the creature it has produced? But if God, too, be Creator, purposing as well as acting, prayer becomes a most reasonable exercise, for prayer is that form of human experience in which man, the person, communes with the personal God.

It may be pointed out further that the fact that man's understanding of God's revelation has differed is no more reason for doubting God's existence than similar differences in our understanding of the communications of other persons is reason for doubting their existence. All our knowledge of reality is progressive, and we should expect the same rule to apply to our knowledge of God. The fact that we have known God imperfectly in the past and have often formed wrong ideas of his nature and purpose is no more reason for doubting that a fuller and truer knowledge of him is possible than the fact that our knowledge of the physical universe has been imperfect or wrong in the past is a reason for doubting that we know the world to-day better than Roger Bacon or Galileo. Of this we may be sure: that if we are to grow in understanding of God, we must follow the same method which we use in other realms of knowledge. We must test the inherited wisdom of the past by the fresh insight of each new generation. Each of us for himself must take the best that has come to him in the experience of the race and put it to the proof of his own life. Prayer is the name

that religion gives to such individual testing of the highest without by the deepest within.

In these and similar ways we may take up, one by one, the theoretical difficulties which our modern scientific habit of mind puts in the way of prayer, and show that they are by no means the insuperable obstacles they are often assumed to be. But this of itself is not enough. Philosophy may deal with difficulties of the mind. In a later chapter we shall consider how it does this. But our most formidable obstacles have their seat in the emotions and in the will. To these a different approach is necessary. Sound reasoning may remove the barriers by which bad logic blocks our path, but only desire can make us walk. The mind may open the door that the mind has closed, but unless we will to step across the threshold, the open door will avail us nothing.

One of the notable achievements of recent psychology has been its reminder of the part which is played in determining conduct by unconscious influences. We are creatures of our instincts and our impulses even more than of our reason. To recover the power of prayer, therefore, we must uncover the hidden causes in our emotional nature which have robbed us of the will to pray.

3. A Hint from Psychology. Piety as Unity

Recent psychology has three things to contribute to our understanding of prayer: in the first place, a more accurate description of what we do when we pray; next, a scientific account of the genesis of the prayer experience; finally, certain practical suggestions which will help to make prayer easier and more effective.

And first of psychology's contribution to the description of prayer. Many people to-day—I was tempted to say most people—think of prayer as petition. Prayer to them means asking God to do things he would not otherwise do, either for themselves or for others. Many of the difficulties to which we have already referred have their roots in this view of prayer. But prayer, as we have seen, is much more than petition. It includes adoration, thanksgiving, communion, worship in all its forms. We have called it the practice of the presence of God. Whatever tends to make explicit to consciousness the fact of God, whatever helps us to realize more vividly our relation to him, is prayer.

The writers of the older devotional books were keenly alive to the many-sidedness of the life of prayer. They analyzed its different types and pointed out the uses of each and the methods to be followed in cultivating it. Roman Catholic literature is especially rich in such analysis. The classical Catholic writers distinguish between mystical prayer, which is a special gift of God to his saints, and ordinary prayer, which, though a supernatural experience, is possible to people in general by the use of the natural powers which they command.

Of the forms of prayer which are in the power of the ordinary worshipper, these writers distinguish four. There is vocal prayer, in which use is made of set forms prescribed by the church, or specially composed by the individual; meditative prayer, in which thought ranges freely over a definite subject-matter, but without any special effort to phrase itself in words; affective prayer, in which emotion predominates over thought, although the latter is also present; and, finally, the prayer of simplicity, where in-

tuition completely replaces reasoning and attention remains concentrated upon a single object without desire for variety.[1]

It is not easy to follow the Catholic writers in their distinction between these different kinds of prayer. One passes into the other by imperceptible gradations. Nor are the different writers themselves always agreed as to where the line is to be drawn.

Modern psychologists have been restudying prayer as a natural phenomenon, and as a result have reclassified the different kinds of prayer according to their relation to the psychological processes which accompany them.

Simplest of all is the prayer which is simply revery, in which the mind yields itself freely to whatever leadings may come from the subconscious reservoir from which much of our definite thought emerges.

Then there is the prayer of recollection, in which we deliberately recall to memory the best moments in our own past. Prayer in this sense takes the form of the voluntary recollection of those deepest principles of will or preference which the activities of living tend to obscure.[2] In the prayer of recollection the will is active. We confront the self of the moment with the larger and better self we would become.

In prayer as meditation, thought, in the technical psychological sense of that term, comes to its own. In meditation we fix our thought upon the "Other" with whom we have to do. The whole world of our experience, whether it be of nature or of other persons, supplies us with symbols by which we make

[1] *Cf.* Poulain, A., "Graces of Interior Prayer" (1904), Eng. tr. by Smith (London, 1910), p. 7.

[2] *Cf.* Hocking, W. E., "The Meaning of God in Human Experience" (New Haven, 1912), pp. 405 *seq.*

vivid to consciousness the presence of this "Other." Like all true thought, our prayer takes the form of discussion. We speak to God and he speaks back to us. We ask him for what we need and he answers us. Prayer has become intercourse, communion.

One more form remains—the prayer of contemplation. In this our attention is concentrated upon a single object, not conversed with, but enjoyed. We no longer talk to God. We contemplate him. We no longer hear him talk to us. We are content to rest in him, as a child in its mother's arms—to delight in him as the artist enjoys the harmony of form or the musician loses himself in the beauty of tone. This is the type of prayer after which the mystics aspire. To them prayer has become worship.

Of these four forms of prayer, the two latter have played the largest rôle in historic religion. The prayer of meditation has been most characteristic of the more ethical type of religion; that of contemplation of the more mystical type; but all four kinds of prayer are found in each living religion, and each has something essential to contribute to the life of devotion.

In discussing prayer we must be careful to make clear which of these various types we have in mind. Much which is true of one does not apply to the others, and by our failure to discriminate we involve ourselves in needless perplexities. Above all, we must distinguish between the *phenomena* which psychology describes, and the *inferences* which certain psychologists have drawn from them. To say that prayer is auto-suggestion may mean simply that the way God conveys his will to me is through thoughts which emerge in my consciousness when I

am in revery. On the other hand, it may be my way of describing the fact that God has become for me simply a creature of my own imagination, without any basis in fact. Psychology and metaphysics are two different things. We must take care not to confuse them.

The distinction between the facts observed and the interpretation we put on them becomes especially important when we pass to the second contribution which psychology makes to our understanding of the life of prayer; namely, the account that it gives of the genesis of the prayer experience.

To follow this in detail would carry us too far afield, for it would require us to give an abstract of the more important conclusions of recent psychology. It is sufficient to say that while in the older psychologies consciousness held the centre of the stage, more recent treatises picture it to us as only the final chapter of a longer and more complicated story. The importance of reasoning is not denied, but it is seen to be only the last step in a complex process in which the dominant rôle is played by the instincts and the emotions.

We can illustrate the analytic method of recent psychology by the analogy of physical science. As physics breaks up the wholes we see into their parts and shows how ions and electrons combine to make the atom, and atoms group themselves into the elements which the older physics regarded as ultimate, so some psychologists resolve the self into a bundle of instincts and emotions which attach themselves to objects without and within and group themselves into larger units known as sentiments, dispositions, and complexes. "The sentiments are those psychological groups or constellations which we consciously

accept; the dispositions those which are unconsciously accepted; the complexes those which are regarded as unacceptable and tend to be repressed." [1] Through all these complex processes of grouping and regrouping, a single unifying principle makes itself felt, now appearing in consciousness as the self, now living its hidden life in the subterranean caverns of the subconscious.[2]

Much study has been given to this subconscious side of our life, and various lists have been made of the instincts and emotions which are the springs of its activity. Different schools of psychologists use different methods in studying it. The Behaviorists have abandoned the introspective method of the older psychology and base their inferences upon the outward changes which they can observe and measure. Introspection, on the other hand, is fundamental in the procedure of the Freudians. They interpret the disorders of the self as the result of repressed complexes by which they mean "psychological constellations formed by the attachment of the instinctive emotions to objects or experiences in the environment, which, owing to their painful or repugnant character, are unacceptable to the self." [3] Their way of dealing with these complexes is to bring them out into the light, reveal them to the subject who is their victim for what they really are, in the confident expectation that this revelation will of itself bring healing and deliverance. This process of self-revelation—a process in which the interpretation of dreams plays an important part—is known as psychoanalysis.

[1] Hadfield, J. A., "Psychology and Morals" (New York, 1925), p. 27.
[2] *Cf.* Tansley, A. G., "The New Psychology" (New York, 1922), pp. 70–81.
[3] Hadfield, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

In the Freudian use of psychoanalysis much is made of the unconscious influence of sex; but this is an incident of the method, not its essence.

It may be admitted that in many cases the self-revelation which psychoanalysis makes possible has proved a curative influence. The practice has by-products, however, which make it dangerous except in the most expert hands. Unwisely used it may turn people's thoughts in instead of out; make them self-conscious and morbid, and foster an analytic habit of mind which inhibits action.

What is true in a peculiar degree of psychoanalysis is true in lesser measure of all preoccupation with the elements of psychic life. One is in danger of resolving the whole into the parts; of losing the forest in the trees.

For we live by wholes, not by parts. The realities with which we have to do in daily life are not ions and electrons, but trees and stones and seas and suns and stars; not instincts and emotions, sensations and thoughts; but men and women and children who are thoughtful or angry or grateful as the case may be. We learn to know the real world not only, or even chiefly, by the method of analysis which science uses, but by the intuition of the whole which is the inspiration of religion.

Here, too, psychology has help to give. It points the way to the correction of its own exaggerations by its emphasis on a principle of the highest importance in the personal life; namely, the principle of integration. The trouble with most of us is that we live divided lives. We are played upon by different impulses which war against one another—the desire to possess and the impulse to share; the mood of resentment and the duty of self-control, etc., etc. If

we are to realize our best selves these conflicting forces must be unified. We must find something big enough to command us completely. This unification of personality by the co-ordination of all its elements through their relation to a dominant purpose is known as integration.

The purpose of analysis is to make integration possible. We bring the complexes that have been skulking in the dark out into the light; not that we may yield to them, but that we may master them. While they were hidden, we could not control them. When we know them for what they are, we can deal with them as they deserve.

But how are we to deal with them? Here psychology has something very definite to say. We are to deal with them by attaching them to something bigger and stronger than themselves; something objective enough to be felt as real; permanent enough to last; and worthy enough to command our inherent loyalty. We call these objects which command our loyalty, ideals.

We must attach our emotions, I repeat, to some object which is felt as real. This calls attention to another psychological principle of the utmost importance. It is a singular fact that these intangible masters of ours which we call our ideals have power to move us in the measure that we believe them to be rooted in the nature of things. We cannot believe that what seems to us best and noblest is merely our own subjective creation. The highest within reaches out to the highest without, and believes that it has found it.

This instinctive tendency of man to attribute reality to elements in the inner life psychologists call projection. It is a psychological name for the proc-

ess by which we apprehend wholes as distinct from parts; the self as distinct from its subjective states; God as distinct from the universe which suggests him. If it be objected that projection is a subjective process, the answer is that it is no more subjective than suggestion or any other process of the mind. If there be a God like ourselves, projection is the method by which we should expect to find him.

Here is where prayer comes to its own. Prayer brings us into contact with God, and God is the only object in the world big enough and lasting enough and worthy enough to serve as the integrating principle of every human personality.

Psychologists are beginning to realize the importance of the contribution which prayer can make to the integration of personality. In answer to the objection that prayer is auto-suggestion, William Brown, the Wilde Reader on Psychology at Oxford, has this to say:

"Personally, I am disposed to reverse the statement, and to say that auto-suggestion is prayer. Auto-suggestion where it succeeds is, I believe, much more nearly akin to prayer than is generally recognized by those interested only in the treatment of functional nervous disease by suggestion. I mean that it is rarely successful unless the patient has at least a subconscious belief that 'the universe is friendly.' Auto-suggestion admittedly demands confidence. But what does this mean? Just as the mere fact of seeking for the cause of a particular phenomenon involves as its intellectual basis the tacit assumption of the principle of the uniformity of nature, so I would urge the emotional basis of a particular auto-suggestion is some measure of confidence, implicitly felt if not explicitly confessed, in the gen-

eral beneficence of the nature of things. In religious natures this confidence expresses itself definitely as faith in God; and, with this explicitly assumed, auto-suggestion is quite clearly a form of prayer." [1]

Even more explicit is the testimony of Captain Hadfield to the contribution of religion to mental health. In his book, "The Psychology of Power," he gives this record of his own experience:

"Speaking as a student of psychotherapy who, as such, has no concern with theology, I am convinced that the Christian religion is one of the most valuable and potent influences that we possess for producing that harmony and peace of mind and that confidence of soul which is needed to bring health and power to a large proportion of nervous patients. In some cases I have attempted to cure nervous patients with suggestions of quietness and confidence, but without success, until I have linked these suggestions on to that faith in the power of God which is the substance of the Christian's confidence and hope. Then the patient has become strong." [2]

The doctors are beginning to recognize that prayer is one of the factors of which they must take account in their profession. If there were no other reason, the rapid increase in the number of persons who specialize in mental healing would force this recognition. Christian Science, as we have seen, is but the best known of an increasing number of cults which profess through prayer, either that of the patient or of the healer, or of both, to cure disease and restore health. With all allowance for exaggeration due to faulty diagnosis or inaccurate observa-

[1] Brown, William, "The Practice of Prayer," in "Religion and Life" (New York, 1923), pp. 81–96.

[2] Hadfield, J. A., "The Psychology of Power" (New York, 1924), p. 51.

tion, it cannot be denied that the number of persons who have been benefited by treatment of this kind is so great as to raise the question whether we have not here a resource of which we would be wise to make a more extended and careful use. The Roman Catholic Church has long recognized the possibility of healing in answer to prayer, and the story of such a shrine as that of Our Lady of Lourdes would include a surprising number of cures of persons whom the more conventional methods had failed to help. Individual Protestants like Doctor Worcester and Doctor McComb of the Emmanuel Movement have made a practice of treating selected patients by prayer; but up to the present time no adequate concerted effort has been made by Protestants to explore the possibilities of the subject as a whole. A recent study of the relation of religion to health made for the New York Academy of Medicine by Doctor Alice Paulsen shows a rich field waiting to be cultivated.[1]

"Piety," said a wise Salesian monk, "is unity."[2] This is the religious version of the psychological principle of integration. There are many different ways in which to bring about the desired unification of the self. But only religion takes account of all the factors that are necessary to a complete integration. To be perfectly well, all things, both within and without, must work together for our good. But that is possible only if there is something without that answers to the need within, something that is at once without and within; the goal of our effort, the standard of our judgment, the inspiration of our activity. This unifying reality religion knows as God.

[1] "Religious Healing," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, May 15, 22, 29, 1926; pp. 1519–1524, 1617–1623, 1692–1697.

[2] "The Interior Life," ed. Tissot, Eng. tr. by Mitchell, 1913 (London, 1894), p. 47.

4. The Principle of Spontaneity

Piety is unity, and the language that piety speaks is prayer. Prayer unifies the divided self by bringing about its willing surrender to the supreme principle of unity, which is God. How shall we justify this insight to ourselves; how remove the inhibitions which so often make prayer, the natural expression of piety, difficult for us?

I have already suggested the answer. We must have done once for all with the idea that prayer is a duty, and realize it for what it is—an unspeakable privilege. Prayer is not something we do because we must, or even because we ought; it is the natural expression of what is best in ourselves; the way we realize the larger life which is laid up for us in God.

Spontaneity, then, must be our first aim. We must be perfectly natural in all that we do. This is a principle on which the older writers on prayer were never weary of insisting. They were always talking about the necessity of *relaxation*, or, as the old German mystics put it, "Gelassenheit"—letting go. To pray effectively one must be free from the sense of strain, and this not as an excuse for laziness or inattention, but as a condition of the highest receptivity.

The importance of this principle is obvious. If there be a God who speaks to us in ways that we can recognize, our ears must be open to what he has to say, and for this we must stop and listen. The crowding thoughts that fill our mind, the engrossing interests that dominate our will, must sink for the moment into quiet. "Be still, and know that I am God," is the first principle of effective prayer. It is a prin-

ciple which applies to more than prayer. It is the condition of all our highest and most rewarding intellectual activity. If we wish to think fruitful thoughts, thoughts that are really fresh and new, we must relax and give our best self the chance to come into its own. Jesus comes back to this principle again and again. Take no anxious thought for the morrow, he tells us. Trust the Father who knows what you need and who cares more than you care.[1]

The history of religion is full of illustrations of this principle. We have seen that it underlies that puzzling doctrine of the old Protestantism which our fathers called justification by faith. The Reformation began with a protest against the idea of prayer as a duty. The mediæval church had worked out an elaborate system of rules for the cultivation of the devotional life—rules which, as we shall see later, have their uses and justification when properly understood. But for many people they had long lost their original meaning, and had become a device for acquiring merit which could be used to avert punishment or to win salvation. Luther protested against this perversion of the religious life. To be justified by faith as he understood it was to shift the centre of life from self to God. It meant to cease to rely on one's unaided will, even in so intimate and personal a matter as character, and to trust God, the creative Spirit, for the new impulse which alone can transform and renew.

In Catholic piety, as exemplified in the great mystics, the relaxation desired is brought about by definite acts of renunciation. The purpose of this renunciation is to suppress the consciousness of self

[1] *Cf.* Matt. 6: 25–34.

that one may find one's happiness and well-being in God alone. Whatever is dear to the natural man must be given up for Christ's sake: home, friends, work, happiness, power, fame, human love in every form. Not only must the pleasures of sense be renounced, but the interests of the mind as well. Thought itself must cease, that in the contemplation of the Infinite one may become literally one with God.[1]

To many Protestants, with their vigorous ethical tradition, there is much in this world-renouncing piety that seems morbid and unnatural. It is not easy to recognize in the ineffable Being whom the mystic holds up for our adoration the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, or to convince ourselves that the life of retirement from the world which the saints cultivated is the path of service to which our Master calls us. If we are to feel our kinship with St. Francis and St. Teresa, we must translate their language into more modern speech, and find our approach to the relaxation they recommend to us in the realm of appreciation in which the artist and the lover are at home.

For relaxation must not be confused with emptiness. On the contrary, the effectiveness of this type of prayer is conditioned by the complementary principle of *recollection*. We are to be still before God, not that he may speak to us out of the void, as those who identify the supernatural with the arbitrary have too often conceived him as doing, but that he may interpret to us the meaning of the lessons that he has been teaching us all through our life. The fruitfulness of our prayer will be determined in no

[1] *Cf.* St. John of the Cross, "Ascent of Mount Carmel," Eng. tr. by Lewis (London, 1922), p. 71.

small part by the richness of our previous experience, the number of inspiring and beautiful thoughts which memory supplies when leisure makes attention possible.

This is the reason for the familiar practice of beginning each period of prayer with a brief reading from the Bible or from some devotional book. Such reading brings into the foreground of attention subjects which are easily taken over into our prayers, and which give them richness and meaning. Indeed, as we have seen, in some of its highest forms, prayer becomes identical with meditation. It is not the saying of words to God, but letting the mind rove over the range of human experience as it is illuminated by the thought of God, taking up one by one the familiar events and experiences of daily life—the persons one knows, the responsibilities one faces, the sorrows one has to bear—as they are transformed by the new context in which they are put by the purpose of God. So conceived, all of life may become the raw material of prayer, the quarry out of which come the human blocks which the Spirit of God is to build into the temple that he is to inhabit.

What I have been trying to say will help us to resolve a familiar antinomy of the religious life: I mean the contrast between prayer as a constant attitude or mood of the soul, and prayer as a conscious activity in which we engage at stated times. The two belong together as indissoluble parts of one and the same experience. When we are working at our humdrum tasks of routine, we are sowing the seed that may blossom, perhaps ten years later, into some beautiful flower of prayer.

It is difficult to exaggerate the transforming effect which this insight may have upon life. In thinking

of prayer as appreciation of the divine meaning of common things, we lay hold upon a principle which is as wide as life itself. Whatever we do, whatever we experience, in the world of art, in the world of science, in our contacts with men in social service or in the ordinary business of every day, and not least in the sorrows and limitations that are the lot of all men, we are to recognize ways in which God is training us for the life of prayer. The more clearly we perceive this, the more heartily we accept the common life of every day as God's gift for our good, the better we shall be fitting ourselves to receive the greater gifts which he has to give us in our best moments.

5. Consequences for Technique

Yet those best moments must come, and we must do what we can to prepare for them, even though we cannot determine the time or the manner of their coming. And this we do by conscious thought as well as by practical activity. There is a technique of prayer which requires cultivation.

This suggests another principle—the principle of *regularity* or *repetition*. We must have times and places of prayer which together make up what we call the *habit* of prayer. We do things easily that we do often. If we are to learn to relax, we must practise, and for this we must have a technique of time and place and method. While it is true that the real significance of our life with God depends not so much on what we think or feel in our brief moments of conscious communion as on the life that we are living all the time, it is equally true that what that life will be, and what it will mean, will be determined

largely by the new impulse which comes to us when we are at our best.

Here we face the difficulty that the things we do habitually tend to lose their definiteness and become matters of routine. The loss of vividness that results from repetition puts one of the greatest practical obstacles in the way of our praying. What we do without inner spontaneity produces a sense of unreality and leads to aversion. A familiar example is the effect of liturgical worship when it is practised by those who are not in the mood to use it in the most effective way. Against the unreality and artificiality of such worship, free prayer was an inevitable protest. But, as we know only too well, spontaneous prayer tends to harden into an unofficial liturgy without the protection which the antiquity and dignity of the older prayers furnish us. We do not escape the difficulty of the deadening effect of routine by exchanging liturgy for free prayer. We must find our remedy within.

Nevertheless, the principle of regularity is a sound one, as our experience on other sides of life shows. In our physical exercise we find the help of habit indispensable; and although the "daily dozen" may degenerate into a deadening daily routine, it *may* become the secret of a constant renewal of physical vitality. So habits of study open the way for fresh and creative activity of the mind by concentrating the energy which the lack of such rules would dissipate in ineffective and wandering thought.

This has a bearing on the length of time which one should set apart for prayer. Various suggestions have been made in the past, ranging all the way from many hours to a few minutes. Only one determining principle can be confidently laid down, and that is

that the time set apart should be such as most to relieve the sense of strain. This will vary greatly for different people. For some an hour will pass so quickly that it will be gone before they know it; for others even five minutes will make heavy demands upon the attention. We must remember that times of prayer are not designed to limit us but to set us free. We shut the closet door that we may not be interrupted, but how long we stay is between us and God. With God it is quality that counts; not quantity. "The Pharisees," the Master said, "think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." [1]

To guard against the deadening effects of routine in prayer, we need to check the principle of repetition by the principle of *variation*, which in turn is determined by the direction of *interest*. If we are to pray effectively, we must not hold our thoughts in too tight a rein. Thought must be allowed to range freely, and when we find something that calls forth our interest, we must not be afraid to linger, even if the delay plays havoc with the rules which we have made. The old masters understood the usefulness of this principle and were not afraid to accept its consequences. Thus in the "Spiritual Exercises," St. Ignatius lays down an elaborate series of rules to govern the meditations of his pupils, but in his directions to the one who conducts the exercises he is careful to say that they must be adapted to the varying need of the individual, and that if any subject of meditation arouses special interest, one must not be afraid to yield to the impulse and to linger on the theme that attracts as long as one will.[2] There are

[1] Matt. 6:7.

[2] Eng. tr. with commentary by Longridge (London, 1919), p. 17; *cf.* p. 163.

many different ways in which this principle of variation may be used to stimulate interest when it flags. Interest may come to us by the way of *appreciation;* some old, familiar thought may be seen in a new light or felt with a new vividness. Or it may come by way of a new *emphasis;* we may concentrate on one particular phase of the subject to the exclusion of others. Or it may come to us by new *surroundings,* either intellectual or physical. We may think of our theme in a new *relation,* or we may get assistance by change of *posture* or of *place.*[1] There is a wide range of possibility here at which we have only time to glance—the help that comes to us when praying in church; or from such familiar outward symbols as the cross; or, in the case of the Catholics, the crucifix. All these are ways in which the principle of variation may be used for the purpose of creating fresh interest in prayer.

It is especially important to call attention to this principle because of the difficulties which the change in our habits of life has made in the use of the older helps of prayer. The pressure of life not only makes it hard to get the quiet time which is required, but the physical conditions under which our life is lived have changed. This is notably true of the family. There are many homes in which the spirit of Christian worship is still alive, where the duties of the different members are so varied that it is not practicable for them to come together in the morning for family prayer, as was the custom a generation ago. If we cannot pray in the morning, let us pray in the evening; if we cannot all be together, then let us meet in groups. If the home does not provide the natural surroundings, there are always open churches

[1] *Op. cit.,* p. 74; *cf.* p. 163.

to which one can go for the fresh impulse which comes from a new contact.

What is true of the more intimate problems of personal and family worship is true on a larger scale of our public worship in church. The present church service as conducted in our larger cities usually includes more than it is possible for any one to take in intelligently at the same time. We need to break the service up into its parts and to make provision for the satisfaction of the different wants which each is designed to meet under conditions more effective than is now possible. Different kinds of people have different needs, and the same person has different needs at different times, needs which the church ought to meet. Children have their needs, which are different from those of older people; people who are tired from those who are mentally alert. The service that is adapted to people who find authority congenial will not be best for those who are living in a critical atmosphere, and often find the vocabulary of the creeds unintelligible. But whatever the particular form that our worship may take, it will be effective in the measure that it conforms to the principles we have been studying, principles which, whether consciously or unconsciously, have been tested by those who have prayed before us.[1]

[1] Doctor Orchard, the minister of the King's Weigh House Church in London, has applied the principle of variation with singular effectiveness. Sometimes he uses an elaborate ritual based on the Roman Mass; at others, a service of extreme simplicity in which free prayer predominates. One cannot worship in his church without realizing that God reveals himself in many ways. While in his little book, "The Devotional Companion," he insists upon the importance of regularity in prayer, he gives many fruitful suggestions by which regularity may be robbed of its monotony and made a help instead of a hindrance.

6. Jesus as Our Teacher of Prayer

With these hints in mind we may turn back to the prayers of the Bible in the hope that the difficulties which at first met us will prove less baffling.

One fact will strike us at the outset, and that is the large place that is given in these prayers to appreciation. "O, sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things." [1] "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." [2] "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad." [3] "O, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good. For his mercy endureth for ever." [4] "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go unto the house of the Lord." [5] These are verses taken at random from the Psalms, but they sound a note which recurs again and again. The Psalmist is living in a world where it is good to be alive, because it is God's world, and God is the fountain of goodness and mercy and truth; the one altogether to be desired, in whom the heart of man may safely rest.

With appreciation goes also the note of intimacy. August as he is, compassed about by clouds and mystery, Jehovah is still recognized as companion and friend. "Lord," cries the Psalmist, "thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." [6] And again: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." [7] He who holds all things in the hollow of his hand; who resists the proud and brings the mighty low, draws near to the man of an humble and contrite spirit that he may make his abode with him.[8]

Above all we find the note of confidence. Prayer

[1] Psalm 98 : 1. [2] Psalm 103 : 2. [3] Psalm 97 : 1. [4] Psalm 107 : 1.
[5] Psalm 122 : 1. [6] Psalm 90 : 1. [7] Psalm 91 : 1. [8] Isaiah 57 : 15.

to these predecessors of ours is not simply a custom inherited from the past which piety constrains them to continue. It is in a very literal sense food and drink for the hungering and thirsting spirit. Conscious of weakness and sin, they turn to God for the strength and cleansing they need. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto thee." [1] "So teach us to number our days, that we may get us an heart of wisdom." [2] "I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust." [3] These are the words of men who have found in prayer a power of renewal which has made them adequate for whatever strain they may be called upon to meet.

What is true of the prayers of the Bible in general is true supremely of the prayers of Jesus. He is our great teacher in the art of prayer. In him we find the principles of which we have been speaking translated from theory into practice. No wonder his disciples came to him with the request which Luke records: "Lord, teach us to pray." [4] The men who made this request were praying men. They had been brought up in homes where prayer was a part of the common life; and they had been praying all their lives. Yet there was something about the life of prayer, as Jesus practised it, that was so different from their own, that they could not be satisfied till they had discovered his secret.

Our Lord regarded the request as a legitimate one. Not only on that particular occasion but all through his years of companionship he was teaching his disciples how to pray.

He taught them by his example. His own life

[1] Psalm 51 : 10, 13. [2] Psalm 90 : 12. [3] Psalm 91 ; 2. [4] Luke 11 : 1.

was a life of prayer. The Gospel of Mark opens with the story of a single day of his life. It was a day that made heavy demands upon strength and sympathy. We see him ministering to one human need after another, calling disciples, healing the sick, casting out demons, and when night falls, still surrounded by crowds of eager folk who had brought their sick to be healed. When at last the pressure is over and he is alone, instead of taking the whole night for rest, as you and I might have done, we find him rising "a great while before day" [1] and going out into a desert place to refresh his spirit by communion with the Father, and to drink again from the reservoir of life which is in God.

He explained to his disciples the principles that make prayer effective; not, to be sure, in any formal way as a professor would have done; arranging them in logical sequence and labelling them one, two, three. He taught them in pictures, telling a story to illustrate each point he wished to make.

There is the story of the Pharisees who stood at the corners of the streets and prayed aloud that they might be heard of men. "Do not be like them," said Jesus. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee." [2] Here we have the principle of independence.

There is the story of the man who went to his friend at midnight, asking for the loan of some loaves for a friend on a journey; who, when his request was refused, would not take "No" for an answer, but remained at his friend's door till he wore him down by his importunity.[3] There are some people who have

[1] Mark 1:35. [2] Matt. 6:6. [3] Luke 11:5–8.

interpreted the parable to mean that God is like this churlish friend, moved by our prayers to do what he would not otherwise have done. The true point of the parable is, of course, just the reverse. We do not have to bribe God to do what he does not want to do. He is more ready to give than we to ask, if the thing we ask is for our good. We are not to think, therefore, that we shall be heard for our much speaking, but should come to God in simplicity and faith, opening to him the desires of our hearts. "If ye then, *being evil*," says Jesus, "know how to give good gifts unto your children, *how much more* shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." [1] Therefore, "Ask and it shall be given you. Seek and ye shall find." [2] Here we have the principle of expectancy.

Then there is that unforgettable story of the two men who went up into the temple to pray: the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not as other men; and the publican who would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven, but beat upon his breast and cried: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." [3] We think of this parable ordinarily as a warning against pride and a lesson in humility. It is not the Pharisee who boasts of his good works who finds favor with God, but the publican who can bring nothing but a penitent spirit. But there is another principle which the incident illustrates—the principle of spontaneity or naturalness. The Pharisee is thinking of himself and what other people may think of him. The publican forgets other people altogether and thinks only of the holy God into whose presence he has come.

Finally, there is the lesson that was taught in the

[1] Luke 11:13. [2] Luke 11:9. [3] Luke 18:13.

garden when our Lord went off alone, with the burden of the world's sin resting upon him, and prayed to his Father and ours—with bitter tears and bloody sweat—that if it were possible this cup might pass from him, only to end at last with the words: "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." [1] Here we have the principle of complete consecration.

One other form of teaching Jesus used, one that has been functioning all through the centuries. He gave us a model of what a prayer should be, the model we call the Lord's Prayer.[2] This illustrates in a remarkable way the principles we have been considering together.

Our Lord begins, as all the great masters of prayer have begun, in the mood of appreciation, or, as we are more accustomed to say, of reverence. "Hallowed be thy name." First of all we must realize who is it to whom we pray, the God who is at once our Maker and our Father, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge, of righteousness and of love; the one who knows us better than we know ourselves, who desires for us worthier things than we ourselves desire, who is more ready to give than we to ask. Jesus bids us realize who it is to whom we pray and desire that this realization may be shared by all God's children everywhere. May thy name be made holy, received with reverence, be appreciated for all the wealth of meaning that it contains.

When we pass to the second part of the Lord's Prayer and come to the particular things to be asked of God, we find that they fall into two groups—the things that all of us need together, and the things we need for ourselves individually. The interesting

[1] Luke 22:42. [2] Matt. 6:9–15; *cf.* Luke 11:1–4.

thing about this part of the prayer is that the Master begins with the things we all need together, and only after he has finished with them takes up the private needs that are peculiar to each of us. That is not the order we usually follow in our own prayers. We begin with our personal needs and, if there is time, go on to add the needs of others.

Our Lord's next prayer, after the initial petition that God's name may be hallowed, is "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." That is where we should always begin, for it is only as we see our individual lives in the larger setting of God's kingdom, it is only as we see our individual needs in the context of God's will, that we can see ourselves as we are and know what it is for which we ought to ask.

"Thy kingdom come"—the time when God's will shall control all life, individual and social; when righteousness and peace and joy shall be the lot of all men everywhere, and brotherhood be a fact and not simply a name!

There have been two interpretations of the prayer for the coming of God's kingdom that have divided Christians almost from the beginning. One view is that our Lord referred to the great transformation that will take place in the future when he returns to earth in person to establish his kingdom among men. From this the conclusion is often drawn that since the consummation can only be complete when Jesus himself reigns as king, any attempt which we may make to change social conditions on a large scale is hopeless, and that our duty is solely to the individual.

Other Christians are convinced that while the purpose of God cannot be completely realized till

the end of time, when living and dead meet in the new life of the world to come, our Lord's plan contemplates a redeemed society as well as saved individuals. It is our duty, therefore, so far as in us lies, to bring all human relationships under the sway of the Christian motive: the state, the school, the workshop and the farm, as well as the family and the church.

Which of the two interpretations will prove the true one only time can show. But of this we can be sure: that whether Jesus come soon or late, in physical presence or as a transforming Spirit, it cannot be his will that you and I should hold aloof from the social duties and tasks of our day, waiting with folded hands for his appearing. Whether we succeed or fail, we must do what in us lies with heart and hand and brain, to bring all life that we can touch into conformity with the principles of Jesus Christ.

What finer ideal can we take for ourselves than so to live that if we knew that Jesus Christ were coming to-morrow, we could think of nothing better to do than we are doing to-day? If the Kingdom of God is ever to come on earth, it will be when everybody without exception is living in that way, each in his own place doing the will of the Father in heaven.

So we come back to the concluding portion of the prayer that deals with the individual. Four things Jesus encourages us to ask for, that each of us needs: sustenance, forgiveness, guidance, renewal.

First comes the prayer for sustenance.

"Give us this day our daily bread." We are to ask God for the things we need to keep life going. This does not mean simply that we are to ask for food for the body, necessary though that may be.

There is another bread of which Jesus had much to say—the bread from heaven; another water he promised to his disciples—the water of life. The mind needs to be fed, and the heart, as well as the body. When we pray "Give us this day our daily bread," let us not forget these deeper needs.

Next comes the prayer for forgiveness.

"Forgive us our debts." Who of us can look back over his life without being reminded of things that make him hang his head with shame? What would we not give if we could wipe out some pages of the past? Jesus encourages us to believe that there is a remedy even for a bad past in the divine forgiveness which is freely given to all who ask in faith.

But there is a condition attached to this prayer. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." A great many people wonder why their prayers are not answered. They forget that God cannot answer our prayers unless we comply with the conditions he has set. We ask him to do things we should do for ourselves. We ask for knowledge, and we are not willing to study. We ask for character, and we are not willing to sacrifice. We ask him to bring in the kingdom, and we are not willing to take off our coats and go to work. We ask to be forgiven, even while we harbor enmity against our brother. Jesus has no promise for the man who approaches God in this spirit. "If thou art offering thy gift at the altar," he says to us, "and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." [1]

Next comes the prayer for guidance.

[1] Matt. 5:23, 24.

"Lead us not into temptation"—not simply the temptation to sin but any experience that puts a strain on faith. Who of us knows what to-morrow may bring? I had a friend most happily married. One bright spring morning his wife was riding with her little daughter in the park. The horse shied. She was thrown. She never recovered consciousness, and that ideal married life came to an abrupt end. A tragedy, we say. Yes, but there are tragedies of the spirit even more heart-breaking; experiences that can shatter life more completely, more devastatingly than any physical bereavement. Our Lord encourages us to pray that we may be delivered from these trials that come to us out of the unknown future and test our faith in the love of God.

But this prayer too we must pray in Christ's spirit and with his condition. He himself once prayed that a trial might pass, and it came. We must learn to say as he did: "Not my will but thine be done."

There is one more prayer, the prayer for renewal. "Deliver us from evil," the evil without and the evil within. It is not enough to have our past sins forgiven if the forces that made us sin are still active within us. More even than forgiveness we need regeneration, that new life of which the Master spoke to Nicodemus when he said: "Ye must be born anew." [1]

There is a passage in the letter to the Romans [2] in which the apostle Paul describes the state of the world of his time. He compares it to a great creature in mortal agony, groaning and travailing in pain, waiting for something to be born which it has not yet seen. This consummation for which the whole creation longs and waits, Paul calls the revela-

[1] John 3:7. [2] Romans 8:18–25.

tion of the sons of God. The world is waiting, he tells us, for men and women who have learned from Christ the secret of renewal—whose spirits are refreshed day by day through communion with God. What the world of Paul's day was looking for is still our need to-day.

III

THE CONTRIBUTION OF HISTORY: PRAYER AS FELLOWSHIP

1. Helps from the Past
2. The Difficulty of Language
3. The Principle of Independence
4. How to Make God Real in Prayer
5. The Place of the Symbol in Prayer
6. Prayer in the Name of Christ

1. Helps from the Past

In the preceding chapter we considered the contribution which psychology can make to the prayer life. We found that psychology describes for us—more accurately than we could do without its help—what goes on in us when we pray, and analyzes the different elements that enter into the making of the self which prays. But the most important contribution of psychology is the new light which it sheds upon the nature and function of ideals. Since the source of our worst evils is the divided self, our chief need is of some influence that will unify the self. This can be found only in some reality greater than ourselves that excites our admiration and commands our loyalty. Such an object commanding loyalty is God. To recover the lost art of prayer we must remove the obstacles that prevent us from seeing God as he is, and from yielding ourselves spontaneously to the attraction of his presence.

We come here to the border line between psychology and history. Psychology can tell us of the part played by the ideal in the integration of the self. It can show us how ideals arise in consciousness. It can point out the part played by the environment, either the narrower environment of our immediate surroundings or the larger environment of history as a whole, in presenting us with objects that arouse our interest and engage our affection. But what that environment will be like in detail, and how it came to be what it is, is no concern of psychology as such. That is the affair of history, which tells us

how the words we use in prayer came to have the meanings which we associate with them to-day.

It is to history, then, that we must turn for information as to what we mean by God, and for the explanation of the different views which men have held of his nature and purpose. Through history we make the acquaintance of those who have prayed in the past, and distinguish among the many meanings which have clustered about the word "God" those which shall define for us the object with which we commune in prayer.

There are two ways in which the study of the prayer life of the past can help us. It can help us in our theory by making us acquainted with what men have thought about prayer before us. It can help us in our practice by showing us how men have prayed. Both helps are important, but the second is of primary importance, for there is nothing that can do more to make prayer seem real to one person than to let him overhear another at prayer.

The prayers of the past have come to us in two main forms, as public and as private prayer. The great liturgies of the church are collections of prayers that have proved their vitality by centuries of use in public worship. They are the storehouse from which private prayer is continually renewed, and to which the great masters of such prayer have turned for their inspiration.

The first of these great collections of public prayers, and by far the most important, is of course the Psalms. The Psalms come to us not only with the sanction of nineteen hundred years of Christian experience, but as the perpetuators of an older tradition of worship which reaches far back into the history of the Jewish religion. The Psalms were the

prayer-book of Israel, and because of their simplicity and naturalness, their complete sincerity and frank disclosure of the deepest feelings of the heart, they remain to this day the most wonderful collection of prayers in the history of any religion.

Of the other prayers in the Bible it is necessary here to say only this: that they illustrate in various ways the principles of spontaneity and independence of which we have been speaking. They impress us most of all by their unstudied character, their fitness to the time and place in which they were uttered. What insight, for example, the Apostle Paul's prayers give us into his character; what priceless sidelights they shed upon his theology. There is not an Epistle that does not begin with prayer; not one but which before it ends has brought all that it contains to the test of prayer. Most of all is to be learned from the prayers of Jesus, and especially from the model prayer which we studied together in the preceding chapter.

Second only in importance to the prayers of the Bible are the historic liturgies, Catholic and Protestant, of which the most familiar to us English-speaking Christians is the Book of Common Prayer. We Protestants know little, as a rule, of the great treasury of devotion laid up in such books as the Service Book of the Eastern Orthodox Church[1] or the Roman Catholic Missal and Breviary. We are repelled by what seems to us the superstition of many of the prayers, and find it hard to press back of the form to the spirit. Yet impartial study will show much in these books that a devout Protestant could make his own, and will reveal the fact that

[1] Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church, Eng. tr. by Hapgood (New York, 1922).

many of the most beautiful of the prayers of our own devotional books have come to us by adaptation from these older sources. It is a defect in the training of our ministers which cannot be remedied too soon that they are so often sent out of the seminaries with little or no acquaintance with this invaluable inheritance—a lack which later experience in too many cases does little or nothing to supply.

Side by side with these formal or public prayers which come to us with the sanction of the church is the inexhaustible treasury of private prayer, a treasury that reaches back through the ages and to which the greatest of our kind have made their contributions. It is a commonplace that Christian unity, elsewhere unattained, is realized in our services of song. Those who have written the great hymns are of every creed and age, and the same hymn-book contains Luther's battle hymn, "A mighty fortress is our God," and Newman's "Lead, kindly light." But the unity of the spirit is even more clearly demonstrated when worship takes the form of prayer. Men of every age and every branch of the church have made their contribution: Augustine and Chrysostom, Francis of Assisi and Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther and Ignatius Loyola, as well as more recent Christians like Martineau and Rauschenbusch.

Take, for example, that prayer of St. Francis[1] in which he thanks God for his friends, Brother Sun and Sister Moon, Brother Wind and Sister Water, Brother Fire and Mother Earth; not forgetting that inevitable, but not always welcome, visitor, Sister Death.

[1] Cited in "The Mirror of Perfection," Everyman's Library, Theology and Philosophy, ed. by Ernest Rhys (London), pp. 294, 295.

"Most High, Omnipotent, Good Lord.
Thine be the praise, the glory, the honour and all benediction.
To Thee alone, Most High, they are due,
and no man is worthy to mention Thee.

Be Thou praised, my Lord, with all Thy creatures,
above all Brother Sun,
who gives the day and lightens us therewith.

And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour,
of Thee, Most High, he bears similitude.

Be thou praised, my Lord, of Sister Moon, and the stars,
in the heaven hast Thou formed them, clear and precious and comely.

Be thou praised, my Lord, of Brother Wind,
and of the air, and the cloud, and of fair and of all weather,
by the which Thou givest to Thy creatures sustenance.

Be Thou praised, my Lord, of Sister Water,
which is much useful and humble and precious and pure.

Be Thou praised, my Lord, of Brother Fire,
by which Thou hast lightened the night,
and he is beautiful and joyful and robust and strong.

Be Thou praised, my Lord, of our Sister Mother Earth,
which sustains and hath us in rule,
and produces divers fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

Be Thou praised, my Lord, of those who pardon for
Thy love and endure sickness and tribulations.

Blessed are they who will endure it in peace,
for by Thee, Most High, they shall be crowned.

Be thou praised, my Lord, of our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no man living may escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin:

Blessed are they who are found in Thy most holy will,
for the second death shall not work them ill.

Praise ye and bless my Lord, and give Him thanks,
and serve Him with great humility."

Or this prayer of Thomas Aquinas before study:

"O, ineffable Creator, who makest eloquent the tongues of babes, instruct my tongue and pour forth from my lips the grace of thy blessing. Grant me acuteness in understanding what I read, power to retain it, subtlety to discern its true meaning, and clearness and ease in expressing it. Do thou order my beginnings, direct and further my progress, complete and bless my ending. Thou who art true God and true man, living and reigning world without end. Amen." [1]

Or this of Ignatius Loyola:

"Teach us, good Lord, to serve thee as thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labor and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do thy will. Amen." [2]

Or that matchless prayer of St. Bernard that has found its way into our hymn-books, and expresses in classical language the genius of mystical piety:

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee,
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

O Hope of every contrite heart,
O Joy of all the meek,

[1] "The Inner Court: A Book of Private Prayer" (New York, 1924), p. 8.

[2] Cited in Dawson, M., "Prayer That Prevails" (New York, 1924), p. 42.

To those who fall, how kind Thou art!
How good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? Ah, this
Nor tongue nor pen can show:
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His loved ones know."

Or, to come nearer to our time, this prayer of Walter Rauschenbusch for children who work:[1]

"O, thou great Father of the weak, lay thy hand tenderly on all the little children on earth and bless them. Bless our own children, who are life of our life, and who have become the heart of our heart. Bless every little child-friend that has leaned against our knee, and refreshed our soul by its smiling trustfulness. Be good to all children who long in vain for human love, or for flowers and water and the sweet breast of nature. But bless with a sevenfold blessing the young lives whose slender shoulders are already bowed beneath the yoke of toil and whose glad growth is being stunted forever. . . . By the holy child that nestled in Mary's bosom; by the memories of our own childhood joys and sorrows; by the sacred possibilities that slumber in every child, we beseech thee to save us from killing the sweetness of young life by the greed of gain."

Or a more recent example still: that prayer of Joyce Kilmer's that voices what many a speechless sufferer felt in the agonizing days of the Great War:[2]

"My shoulders ache beneath my pack
(Lie easier, Cross, upon His back).

I march with feet that burn and smart
(Tread, Holy Feet, upon my heart).

[1] Rauschenbusch, Walter, "Prayers of the Social Awakening" (Boston, 1910), pp. 51, 52.
[2] Holliday, R. C., Joyce Kilmer (New York, 1918), vol. I, p. 109.

Men shout at me who may not speak
(They scourged Thy back and smote Thy cheek).

I may not lift a hand to clear
My eyes of salty drops that sear

(Then shall my fickle soul forget
Thy agony of Bloody Sweat?).

My rifle hand is still and numb
(From Thy pierced palm red rivers come).

Lord, Thou didst suffer more for me
Than all the hosts of land and sea.

So let me render back again
This millionth of Thy gift. Amen."

Each of these prayers has strong marks of individuality. Each takes for granted a special situation and addresses itself to a special need. Yet there is something in each that is universal in its appeal. When one takes such words upon one's lips, one feels that one has pressed beneath all that is sectarian and divisive, and touched the deep springs of our common humanity.

In addition to these collections of prayers, public and private, we have inherited from our predecessors, both Catholic and Protestant, a rich literature on the theory of prayer. This takes two main forms: a commentary on the historic forms of worship—the Mass and the other prescribed services of the church—and a discussion of the principles of worship in general with special reference to the practice of private devotion.[1]

In the Catholic Church the study of the theory of prayer has been carried further than with us, and

[1] Some of the more important of these books have been listed in the Appendix.

the number of books written on the subject is legion. The results of this study have been worked out in the rules of the different orders. Their inner spirit is given us in such mystical treatises as Thomas à Kempis's "Imitation of Christ," St. Teresa's "Interior Castle," and "The Ascent of Mount Carmel" by St. John of the Cross. In recent years the study of mysticism has had an increasing attraction for Protestant students, and a number of writers of whom the best known to English-speaking Christians are Evelyn Underhill and Rufus M. Jones have interpreted to their Protestant fellow Christians the genius of mystical piety.

The devotional literature of Protestantism is at once less voluminous and more familiar. The worship of the older Protestantism was formed upon Catholic models, as the prayer-book clearly demonstrates. Luther's first liturgy was called the German Mass. Some of the reformers were more, some less, radical in their revision, but all retained something of the old. The seven sacraments became two, the priestly function was extended to all believers, and the place of free prayer was vindicated in public worship.

In place of the elaborate rules of the Catholic orders, each worshipper was left free to work out his prayer life for himself, with the help of the models given in the Bible. Yet many of the older mystical books were still read by Protestants, and the ideal of piety remained other-worldly and self-centred. A vivid picture of the type of devotional ideal which long continued to dominate Protestantism at its best is given in William Law's "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life."

Apart from the more conservative Protestant tra-

dition perpetuated in the Lutheran, the Reformed, and the Anglican Churches, the systematic cultivation of the devotional life has assumed three main forms in Protestantism: the spiritual worship of the Friends, the free testimony of the Methodist class-meeting, and the return to the older Catholic models in the Anglo-Catholic movement. Each has something of value to contribute to the devotional life of to-day; of each we shall have something to say in a later chapter.[1]

But there is a third contribution which the past makes to the life of prayer—in some respects the most important of all—and that is the service of the church as it meets us in the order of public worship. In this order prayer holds a central place, and all that is done, whether by minister or people, is designed to make more vivid that consciousness of God which is the distinguishing feature of all true prayer.

Churches differ in the extent to which they make use of liturgy in their public worship. In the Roman Catholic Church and such Protestant communions as the Anglican and the Lutheran, liturgy holds a prominent place. Free prayer is reduced to a minimum, and the people participate in the service through making use of the historic forms which have come down to them from the past. In churches of the non-liturgical tradition, like the Congregational, the Methodist, and the Baptist, there is greater flexibility in the service and free prayer is extensively used. Yet even here the order of worship follows models set in the past, and the effectiveness of the service depends in no small part upon the participant's consciousness that he is sharing in the fellow-

[1] Pp. 149–151.

ship of prayer which unites worshippers of many different generations.

These, then, are the helps which the past supplies —prayers, theories of prayer, and a praying church. But there are certain difficulties in connection with their use which make that help less effective than it otherwise might be. There is, in the first place, the difficulty of the medium of expression. Many of the words that were familiar to those who wrote the old prayers we no longer use, and so we fail to grasp their meaning. There is the more serious difficulty of the thing expressed. Even when we understand what these early worshippers meant to say, we find their thought moving in a world so remote from our own that we no longer feel at home in it, and wonder whether we can honestly use the words they used. These difficulties we must frankly face if we are to gain the help the past is fitted to give us.

2. The Difficulty of Language

And first of the difficulty of an unfamiliar form of expression. The prayers of the past have come down to us in words. But language presents problems which will repay our careful attention.[1] Every word is a sign pointing to something beyond itself. As such it has a triple relation: (1) to the object pointed at; (2) to the person who points; (3) to the person who hears the word and interprets its meaning. To appreciate the significance of any particular word we must fix our attention not only on the *reality* the word was meant to signify, but also on the *impression*

[1] *Cf.* Ogden and Richards, "The Meaning of Meaning" (New York, 1923).

it produces, both on the mind of the one who uses it and of those who hear him speaking.

Let us take for example the word "cross"—a word that constantly recurs in our services of worship. The reality referred to by the term is not the two pieces of crossed wood on which our Lord hung on Calvary, or even the death that he died on them, but the love that expressed itself in that death for our salvation. But the impression which the word cross will make both upon those who use it and upon those who hear it will depend upon the associations which have grown up in connection with their past use of the term. To one man the cross will mean a particular theory of the atonement; to another the term will suggest the supreme example in history of sacrificial love.

Or take the word "Father" as applied to God. There the reality referred to is a relation between God and man which involves control on the one hand and dependence on the other. But the impression which the word produces will vary according to the associations which the word Father calls forth. To one person the dominant idea will be sovereignty. God is Father because his will is supreme. To another it will be sympathy. God is Father because he understands the children he has made and cares for them as an earthly father cares for his children.

Each of these factors, the reality referred to and the impression produced by the reference, presents problems of its own. Thus the reality of which we speak may include aspects of which we have no knowledge, but which are known to others whose experience is wider than our own. Lincoln was a different man to John Hay, his private secretary, from what he was to Herndon, who knew him only

as his law partner in Springfield. Or again, the thing of which we speak may itself be changing, like a plant which grows or the character of a person, so that what is a true description of it to-day may be inaccurate to-morrow.

Conversely, the impression produced upon those who use the word may vary. To the speaker the intellectual aspect of the thing of which he speaks may be most prominent, while to the hearer the appeal of the word is primarily to the emotions. God may mean to one man the great first cause which explains the universe; to another, the loving Father in whom the heart of man may safely rest. Often the associations made when the word was first used remain normative for all future use, and prevent us from receiving the fresh insight that would come to us with later experience. On the other hand, the inevitability of change may be recognized from the first. We may think of God as the living God, ever at work in his universe, and expect that as we learn more of what he is doing, we shall come to understand him better.

The distinction between the theoretical significance of words and their emotional associations is of great importance for the life of prayer. All words possess emotional associations to a certain degree, but the proportion varies greatly in particular instances. In poetry the emotional appeal predominates over the intellectual, whereas in prose the reverse is true. In music we have a sound language in which the limitation of definite conceptions is largely removed and the emotions have free play. That is why music played in a reverent spirit makes so great a contribution to our service of devotion. In prayer we seek to stimulate the emotional rather than the intellectual side of our nature. Music, therefore, the lan-

guage of the emotions par excellence, is peculiarly fitted to put us in the mood of prayer.

This dual relationship—to the reality referred to and the person addressed—raises problems as to the use of words, both intellectual and moral. The intellectual problem is one of understanding. How far can I be sure that the word I hear means to me what it meant to those who first used it? The ethical problem is one of honesty. How far can I be sure that the word I use will mean to those who hear me what it means to me?

One of the most familiar of our hymns is the well-known hymn of Bishop Heber which begins: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." In this hymn we find the line "God in three persons, blessed Trinity." What exactly do we mean by the word "person"? Clearly not what we mean when we refer to some human friend as a person—a separate self-consciousness with independent will and activity. The word person in the creed is the translation of the Latin word "persona," which means a mask, a part played in a play. As applied to God it means something distinctive in the divine being for which no adequate human analogy can be found, but which is known to us in experience through the redemption of Jesus Christ.

This illustrates the intellectual difficulty in the use of words. But even if we are able to surmount this, the ethical difficulty remains. Granting that I myself understand the words I use, and that they help to clarify my thought of the reality to which they refer, will that be equally true of others? May not my use of old terms be confusing instead of helpful to them, and help to perpetuate misunderstandings from which my own thought is happily free?

This caution is particularly necessary because of the tendency of words to detach themselves from the object of their first reference and to live a life of their own. In extreme cases this detachment may be so complete that the original reference has been completely lost. Primitive religion is full of such examples. The power which belonged originally to the thing the word signified is attributed to the word itself. Often the word acquires magical significance, and is used as a charm to produce results which are only possible to the reality it signifies. The prayer-wheel of the Thibetan is an extreme case; but the principle can be paralleled in every religion. The use of prescribed prayers to acquire merit or to mitigate punishment is a familiar Christian example.[1]

3. The Principle of Independence

How, then, shall we deal with this double difficulty: the intellectual difficulty of an unfamiliar vocabulary; the ethical difficulty of a changing belief? How can we use the old prayers so that they shall be helps and not hindrances; stimuli to spontaneous devotion rather than models to be followed without change? Only as we make earnest with the second of our guiding principles—the principle of independence. We misconceive the help which the experience of our predecessors was meant to give if we think of their prayers as setting a standard to which we must conform, instead of as an incentive to fresh adventure. Each age has its own needs that are peculiar to itself, and expresses those needs in the thought forms of its own day. No man's experi-

[1] Other illustrations of the tendency of words to lose their original reference are given in Ogden and Richards, *op. cit.*, pp. 33–100.

ence of God can be reproduced by any other without change. Only as we realize this limitation fully, and accept it without reserve, shall we be able to penetrate the barriers which separate the devotional life of other ages from our own, and find the ancient prayers speaking a universal language and voicing for us needs which all men feel.

The principle of independence in prayer is the natural consequence of the Christian view of the nature of personality. It registers the value of the individual for God. Jesus phrased it in unforgettable speech when he reminded his disciples of God's care for the sparrows and the lilies. God who is the infinitely great is at home with the infinitely small. He expresses himself through difference as well as through uniformity; through change as well as through permanence. In his universe each tiniest particle has a work to do which none other can do. In his kingdom no single individual can take the place of any other. To understand what prayer has meant to others, we must ourselves have learned what prayer may mean to us.

What is true of individuals is true of ages. No age thinks of God quite as its predecessor did, or talks to him in quite the same language. Yet the same God reveals himself to each, speaking to each in the language it is fitted to understand. Piety, as we have seen, is unity, but unity is not uniformity. In God's house of prayer there are many rooms, and each has a window opening on a different vista. We miss the best in our fellowship with others if we do not realize that there is a side of life in which we and they must work and pray alone.

This principle of independence is fundamental in the Catholic theory of piety. The purpose of the dis-

cipline to which the worshipper submits when he undertakes the cultivation of the higher life is that he may be freed from dependence upon all that is transient and contingent, and may fix his attention upon God alone. "To this end," writes Ignatius, "it is necessary that we should make ourselves indifferent to all created things in all that is left to the liberty of our free will and is not forbidden, in such sort that we do not, for our part, wish for health rather than sickness, for wealth rather than poverty, for honor rather than dishonor, for a long life rather than a short one, and so in all other things, desiring and choosing only that which may lead us more directly to the end for which we were created." [1]

This gives the clue to much that would otherwise be puzzling in the practice of Catholic piety; the time spent in self-examination; the temporary renunciation of enjoyments in themselves harmless; the voluntary submission to the direction of a confessor—all these are designed to train the will in self-control and make it independent of influences that divert attention from the main purpose.

It is true that all too often the effect produced was the reverse of that intended. Instead of developing independent personalities able to stand on their own feet and walk alone, Catholic training has frequently reduced those who submit themselves to it to a state of complete dependence upon others. It was to recover this lost independence that Protestantism broke with the monastic rule in all its forms. Yet in Protestantism, too, there is a great gap between ideal and attainment. From our environment, conscious and unconscious, a hundred subtle influences reach out to us, limiting our freedom in ways

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

we often do not realize until it is too late. Prayer should deliver us from these enslaving influences. It is the supreme test of our independence of character.

With this principle in mind we may turn back to the legacy of the past, confident that in spite of the difficulties in the way, we shall find there the help we need. We may illustrate both the difficulty and the help in the case of the Psalms.

To use the Psalms rightly, we must take them for what they are—the utterance of men who dared to address God with perfect sincerity, opening to him without reserve whatever was in their hearts. Born of private and individual experience, they won their place in the collection of the public prayers of Israel because of the completeness with which they breathe the spirit of personal devotion. They remain the prayer-book of twentieth-century Christianity because after the lapse of so many generations they still voice the perennial needs of the human heart.

The very naturalness and sincerity of the Psalms, as we have seen, often makes it difficult for men who are living under different conditions to use them as the vehicle of their own devotion. So much has changed in our environment, both inner and outer. There are so many things for which these old worshippers prayed that we do not need, so many new wants that have come to us of which they knew nothing, that it is easy for us to overlook those deeper common longings which we share with them. The only way in which we can make the Psalms the natural expression of our own devotion is to follow the example their writers have set us, and to cultivate in our own lives the same independence in our address to God that they so signally illustrated. Only

as we open our hearts to God as completely as they, undeterred by the thought of how our prayer may appear to others, shall we realize our fellowship with them and make their language the natural vehicle of our own inmost aspiration.

But when we do this, we shall find that our difficulties largely disappear. In the measure that we develop an independent life of our own with God, we shall recognize our kinship with all those who have lived such a life before us. The differences which separate us from them—not only in outward environment but in intellectual outlook and emotional mood—will fade into the background in comparison with the one fact that matters: that these were men who turned to the deity for help in the deepest need of their soul, and found him answering that need with his divine response. We shall not need any commentator to tell us what in the Psalms is transient and what enduring. Our own experience of the present God will give us the clew we need.

With the resolution of the intellectual difficulty, the ethical difficulty will take care of itself. If the old prayers, in spite of their unfamiliar language, really express needs which we feel and aspirations which we share; if, in spite of the radical changes in our thought, they witness to a reality in which we, too, believe, we shall use them without apology, and we shall be right in doing so. The same principle of independence which frees us from the necessity of using any form which does not answer to some present need in ourselves, gives us the right to use any form which does so answer, however strange and unsatisfactory it may seem to others who have not yet found our clew. We are to be free in our prayer, not that we may remain permanently in our solitude,

but that we may enjoy fellowship with all those who have won like freedom before us.

4. How to Make God Real in Prayer

We may illustrate the application of the principles we have been considering in connection with the word most frequently on our lips in prayer—the word "God." No word is more familiar; none illustrates more vividly the possibility of misunderstanding. God means one thing to the philosopher; another to the worshipper. To the philosopher God means the ultimate reality for thought, however that reality may be conceived; to the religious man God means the supreme object of worship, whatever that object may be, and whatever the qualities which make it seem adorable. The story of philosophy is the story of the ways in which different thinkers have conceived the ultimate reality—Plato as idea, Hegel as spirit, Spinoza as substance, Schopenhauer as unconscious will, Herbert Spencer as the unknowable, Bergson as *l'élan vital*. The story of religion is the story of the different ways in which religious men have pictured the object of their adoration, and of the ways in which they have expressed their adoration in worship. Sometimes the two streams join and the two currents flow in a single channel. The God of philosophy becomes the God of religion, and vice versa. In highly developed religions the supreme object of worship is usually identified with the ultimate reality for thought. God is thought of as the realized ideal. In theistic religions like Christianity, he is at the same time the reality which is realizing the ideal in others.

When we use a great word like God we must have

constantly in mind this many-sided background of association, both the intellectual associations which have been formed through the discussions of philosophers about God's personality and his absoluteness —the debates between pantheist and theist and pluralist—and the emotional associations which have grown out of the personal experiences of daily life, the associations of mystery, of power, of righteousness, and of love. What the word God will mean to us at any time will be determined by the relative emphasis we give to different elements in this many-sided content, and this in turn will be determined by the associations already formed for us by contact with those who have used the word before us. Like every other term that points to an enduring reality, the word God is in process of constant redefinition, and to this redefinition each man's life, and not least his life of prayer, has its contribution to make.[1]

There is nothing in this to surprise us or to cause us perplexity. It is only the application in the sphere of religion of principles of which we make use every day. That our thought about reality is constantly changing, we all recognize. That these changes are reflected in the meaning of the words we use is equally obvious. But it would be foolish to conclude, as some people would have us do, that because the meaning we give to the term "God" alters with enlarging experience, no reality exists which has the qualities and produces the effects the term "God" suggests. If we were convinced of this, it would, indeed, reduce all religion to illusion and make prayer impossible. Unless there is a real world about

[1] *Cf.* Stewart, M. B., "God and Reality" (New York, 1926), for interesting illustrations of the changing meanings which the word "God" has acquired in the course of its history.

which to talk, and real persons in it, there is no longer any motive for speech either to man or to God. Unless there is a real God to whom to pray, we shall soon stop praying.

We shall consider, in a later chapter, the reasons which justify us in believing that there is a God to whom to pray. Here it is sufficient to point out that the experiences which lead us to faith in such a God are recurrent experiences. There is the experience of dependence, which reveals to us the presence of a Greater than we. There is the experience of freedom, which leads us to conceive of this Greater as personal. There is the experience of responsibility, which makes us aware of a law of righteousness to which we are subject, and of a judge to whom we must give account. There is the experience of human fellowship, with its appeal for sympathy and its demand for sacrifice, which suggests to us the possibility of a love greater than that of man. Above all, there is the experience of wonder as we face the mystery of life, and in our moments of insight seem to detect the presence of one who contains in himself the answer to all our questions and the satisfaction of all our needs.

These recurrent experiences have left their impress upon the meaning of the term "God." Side by side with the changing elements to which we have referred, there are elements which are always present, meanings which are expressed by such terms as power, wisdom, righteousness, love, holiness. These form a bond of union with those who have worshipped before us, and, in spite of all later changes, make it possible for us to feel at home in their experience.

Our first task, then, when we approach God in

prayer, is to realize to whom we are speaking. We are to practise the presence of God. This does not mean that we are to put pressure upon God to come where he is not. It means, rather, that we should concentrate our thought on those aspects of life which assure us that he is here already. It means that we should share the experiences which have led those who have prayed before us to describe what they have come to know of God in the great words which have come down to us from the past—words like holy, righteous, merciful, forgiving, almighty, eternal, wise, loving.

There is the experience of dependence which reveals to us the greatness of God. We live in a world we did not make and are played upon by forces we resist at our peril. Wherever we look, whether out upon nature or in upon ourselves, we discover law. It is so in the physical universe. The law which holds the suns in their courses determines the fall of the leaf. It is so in human life. The law which makes of each one of us a separate individual, different from every other who ever lived, unites us to our fellows by indissoluble bonds. Science can reveal to us what these laws are, but it cannot alter them. It can teach us how to use them for our own purposes, but only as we submit to their control.

In the garden of Count Okuma, the famous statesman who had so much to do with the making of modern Japan, I once saw a dozen Japanese women using a rough battering-ram consisting of a great beam of wood which at regular intervals they lifted and let fall. The weight of that beam was a fair measure of the united strength of those women. Yet with a modern jack, such as we use to lift our auto-

mobiles, any one of them could have commanded power sufficient to enable her easily to lift the beam alone.

So science, through its discovery of law, is increasing our mastery of the powers of nature, and we can set no limits to what it may still do for us. With a stick of dynamite we can blast the solid rock; by the touch of a button, set machinery in motion that will do the work of ten thousand men; through the radio, send messages that will reach the ears of millions. But the power we use is not our own but that of a Greater than we. Whence came this power and what uses as yet undiscovered is it designed to serve? Religion assures us that it comes from God, and so gives us the first element in our definition. Whenever men speak of God, they think of something greater and stronger than themselves. To be religious means to look up.

But how shall we think of this mysterious Power, this Greater than ourselves? Shall we think of it as like ourselves or as unlike? Here we find a new set of experiences which supply a new element in our definition. We are free beings who act from reason as well as from impulse. We weigh alternatives and measure consequences. We "look before we leap." And from this experience of freedom we rise to the conception of a personal God. The uses to which nature lends itself we account for by the divine purpose. The meanings which we discover in history we explain as the outworking of a divine plan. So our experience of freedom adds a new attribute, and we think of God not only as strong but as free and as wise.

Still further elements in our definition are supplied by our experience of responsibility. When we face

the alternatives between which we must choose, we find that there is another factor than our own preference of which we must take account. When our inclination leads us to take the easiest path, there is something in us that says "Stop," that says "No," that says "Shame." There is an inner voice which in every generation has sent men to prison or to the stake for conscience' sake. Whence does it come, this silent monitor, and what explains its extraordinary influence? Religion assures us that it comes from God, and with this assurance adds a new attribute in the divine righteousness. When the Jewish people reached the low-water mark of their national history, it was not by the sword that they recovered their national morale and became once more the moral leaders of mankind. It was by the preaching of the prophets. Amos, the herdsman, made himself Jehovah's spokesman when he said: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth. Therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities." [1] Isaiah and Micah declared that Jehovah was weary of sacrifices and burnt offerings, and demanded justice and mercy as the condition of his favor.[2] Bitter experience taught Israel that there is a God who demands social righteousness. This lesson we have been relearning in the World War. The war has shown us that nations which make self-interest their supreme guide of life and organize their civilization on the basis of force alone, invite disaster.

The experience of human fellowship is still another source from which we derive our knowledge of God. Long ago the author of the Johannine Epistles pointed out the connection between human love and

[1] Amos 3:2. [2] Isaiah 1:10–17; Micah 6:6–8.

the love of God. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen," he reminds us, "cannot love God whom he hath not seen." [1]

There was a time when it was the fashion to speak of love as a late discovery, the contribution of Christianity to a loveless world. But we know now that its roots lie much further back in the sense of kinship that unites the members of the pack and in the care of the female for her young. We see this protective impulse extending from the animal to man, from the body to the spirit, from the family to larger social groups, like the tribe, the social class, and the nation. And presently we see something stranger still. Love of one's own we can understand—of wife, of children, of friends; but when it comes to enemies, love seems a contradiction in terms. Yet we see Jesus refusing to make this exception. We hear him saying to his disciples: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." [2] And what is more significant, we see him illustrating his teaching by his life. We see him loving the loveless and praying for forgiveness for those who crucified him. So the cross of Jesus Christ, reinterpreting for us the meaning of love, adds another to the divine attributes. God means to us now the love that does not shrink from sacrifice, the patience that can endure the contradiction of sinners, the wisdom that can make suffering an open door to sympathy and to enlightenment.

These, then, are some of the qualities which give meaning to the term "God"—power, wisdom, righteousness, love. But there is something more that needs to be added before the list is complete—a

[1] I John 4: 20. [2] Luke 6: 27, 28.

quality easier to feel than to define, the quality we call holiness. There is something in God that for all his kinship sets him apart from us, something that appeals to our sense of awe and sets us wondering, and, before we know it, adoring. Without reverence none may enter his presence or call upon his name.

Otto has called attention to this quality in God in the book already referred to, "The Idea of the Holy." [1] Wherever we touch God we touch mystery. When we come into his presence we feel a thrill that sets us asking "Why?" It was so in the childhood of the race. In the lightning and the storm wind men saw the messengers of God and asked themselves in wonder whence they came and whither they were going. Many as are the centuries that have passed, we have not outgrown this sense of wonder, and to us as to our fathers it attaches to the simplest and most recurrent experiences of life.

God, who is the author of life and of law and of love, is the author of mystery. There is the mystery of birth—this new, tiny life that comes into existence out of the void, and grows little by little through the helpless years, increasing in strength, awakening to intelligence, unfolding in character, in ways at once so free and so strangely determined that we never cease to marvel at it. Whence did it come? Whither is it going? What is this mysterious urge within us which is always pushing us on to something new, something unexplored? Why can we not be satisfied to rest where we are? Who is this "Hound of Heaven" who is ever urging us onward?

There is the mystery of death, most familiar of all experiences. Yet we never get over our surprise

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 12–41.

when it comes. In my early twenties I was called to the bedside of my grandmother, an old lady of more than eighty years. During the silent night hours I sat by the bedside where the little white figure was lying, and watched the breath coming and going, softer and softer, till of a sudden it stopped and all was still. Something had gone. Where had it gone? It is a question which men have been asking since the dawn of history. Job asked it when he said: "If a man die, shall he live again?" [1]

This birth which is the beginning of growth, this death toward which sooner or later life is inevitably leading us, what do they mean? What are we to make of this world of ours that is always the same and yet always different, changeless in its laws, yet never standing still, holding within its bosom so many mysteries? The mystery of pain, for example, that most baffling of all mysteries that at some time every one of us faces, either in his own person or in the person of some one whom he loves. Who will tell us its meaning, who will give us the answer to our question "Why?"

Here, again, religion has its answer—the same answer that we have been studying all along. The explanation of life's puzzles, the solution of its mysteries, is a greater mystery still—the mystery of God. In these recurrent experiences that baffle even while they fascinate us, we discover another actor at work, one like us, yet unlike, akin, yet greater, in whose all-embracing purpose our conflicting purposes are taken up and reconciled, by whose reservoirs of power our limited strength is reinforced, in whose wisdom we can rest even where we cannot see clearly, by whose righteousness we test our lives,

[1] Job 14:14.

in whose love we find our inspiration to sacrifice. When we contemplate his perfection, we forget our own littleness and limitation. When we look upon the world as he sees it, we discover a new beauty, the beauty of holiness. Life is still mysterious and many a question remains unanswered, but the mystery no longer appalls, for behind the veil we cannot yet penetrate we are assured that God is working out his holy purpose; and knowing this, we are at peace.

These, then, are some of the constant meanings that attach to the word God—superiority, wisdom, righteousness, love, holiness. When we speak of God, we call to mind the recurrent experiences which, however interpreted in detail, have led men in every age to conclude that there is something in the universe greater than themselves, something present and enduring, something worthy of their highest allegiance: a standard for conduct, a consolation in sorrow, an inspiration to service, something to which they relate themselves in practical ways if only by saying: "You only will I worship."

This many-sided background of experience we must have in mind if we are to realize what the great word God means to those who approach him in prayer. We are not the first to come to God with our needs and will not be the last. In nature, in conscience, and in the life of the soul, men in every generation have seen the revelation of a Greater than themselves, and have lifted up their spirits to him in worship. The prayers of the past bring vividly before us this age-long fellowship of wonder and of adoration. By revealing to us what prayer has meant to others, they interpret to us what prayer may mean to us. In prayer we address ourselves to

the One who contains within himself the answer to all our questions, himself the mystery of mysteries, surpassing in his wisdom our power to comprehend, in his love, our capacity to appreciate.

5. The Place of the Symbol in Prayer

Thus far we have been discussing prayer as if it expressed itself simply in words; but the word is only one form of language—that addressed to the ear. There is another form, even more primitive, which is addressed to the eye. In Catholic piety, whether Roman or Anglican, gesture plays an important part. The mass is a drama in which the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is re-enacted in the presence of the congregation. All the senses conspire to produce the impression of wonder and mystery. Form, color, music, motion, light—each has its part to play.

The Reformers were keenly alive to the abuses of ceremonial religion. They condemned the mass as a magical ceremony and rejected the Catholic view of sacramental grace as superstitious. They made the word rather than the sacrament the true means of grace, and while retaining the latter, interpreted it as the word in action. They did not realize as clearly as we do now that words, too, have their dangers, against which we need to be on our guard. We have seen that they are signs that point to something beyond and outside themselves; yet, like the simpler language of gesture, they tend to sever the original connection and to claim an independence which does not belong to them. We call this overemphasis of the letter dogmatism; it corresponds to the overemphasis of the act which we call ritualism.

Yet, both kinds of language have their place, and

each has something indispensable to contribute to the life of prayer. Prayer, as we have seen, is an activity of the whole man, not of the mind alone, but of the affections and of the will. Whatever helps the worshipper to visualize the object of his adoration; whatever makes him more sensitive to its emotional appeal, ministers to the devotional life.

This insight explains the large place given to ritual in Catholic religion. Ritual is a form of service in which art is consciously employed to heighten the emotional quality of words, and in some cases to render them altogether unnecessary. In high mass as performed in a great Catholic cathedral all the arts are brought under requisition. Architecture contributes the suggestion of infinite space and of unresolved mystery. Music plays its part in solemn anthem and choral response. The candles of the altar and the incense in the censer carry the thought upward. Vestments and posture lend form and color to the drama of the soul. So, in a very literal sense, to the instructed observer, all his creatures combine to praise the Lord, and in his temple everything saith Glory.

It is not easy for the average Protestant to feel at home in Catholic worship. When he attends mass for the first time, it is apt to appear to him either an unmeaning spectacle or a mass of superstition. It is only as he studies the Missal and learns what the different parts of the service mean to the Catholic who follows them intelligently that he begins to revise his attitude of unqualified condemnation. And when he pursues his inquiries further and learns what freedom the church gives the worshipper to approach God in his own way, he is led to a still further revision of judgment.

Three possibilities are open to the Catholic who

attends mass. He may follow the service in the English Missal, accompanying the priest step by step in everything that he does, or, if he prefers, he may bring with him one of the books of private devotion which his church puts in his hands (*e. g.*, "The Inner Court") and use the time of the service in following out the line of worship which he has selected for himself, only joining his fellow worshippers in the great act of adoration which accompanies the elevation of the host. Or still again, if he is not in the mood for formal prayer, he may simply follow his own private thoughts, worshipping God as seems good to him, just as any Protestant would do in his own home. Indeed, it is one of the features of Catholic piety that the worshipper realizes that he is in the house which God has provided for his children—a house always open to him when he feels the need of worship, as for others of the family who may come moved by the same impulse.

There is a poem of Alice Meynell's called "The Unknown God," [1] which will help us to appreciate how this consciousness of common worship may aid the individual Catholic in his private devotion. As she kneels, waiting her turn to go up to the altar and to receive at the priest's hands the body of her Lord, she becomes aware of a worshipper kneeling at her side who has just partaken of the sacrament, and realizes that the Christ whom she has come to meet is even now revealing himself to this disciple. Unknown to her, he is no stranger to her Lord; and her spirit, crossing the barriers of ignorance and

[1] Meynell, Alice, "Poems" (New York, 1913), p. 43. (In my book, "Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy," I have already used this poem as an illustration of the genius of Catholic piety; but it is so apt to my purpose that I repeat it here.)

mystery by which they are separated, appeals to the Christ who is blessing her brother to bless her also.

> One of the crowd went up,
> And knelt before the Paten and the Cup,
> Received the Lord, returned in peace, and prayed
> Close to my side; then in my heart I said:
>
> "O Christ, in this man's life—
> This stranger who is Thine—in all his strife,
> All his felicity, his good and ill,
> In the assaulted stronghold of his will,
>
> "I do confess Thee here,
> Alive within this life; I know Thee near
> Within this lonely conscience, closed away
> Within this brother's solitary day.
>
> "Christ in his unknown heart,
> His intellect unknown—this love, this art,
> This battle and this peace, this destiny
> That I shall never know, look upon me!
>
> "Christ in his numbered breath,
> Christ in his beating heart and in his death,
> Christ in his mystery! From that secret place
> And from that separate dwelling, give me grace."

Though vividly conscious of the dangers of ceremonial religion, the Reformers recognized the contribution of the senses to worship through their retention of the sacraments. The Westminster Shorter Catechism defines a sacrament as "a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers." [1] Like the words of the creed, it is a symbol pointing us to an invisible reality. In baptism we are reminded of our need of purification from sin, and of the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit. In the Lord's

[1] Question 92.

Supper we recall the sacrifice of our Lord upon Calvary, and spiritually appropriate the benefits of his atoning death. In sacramental religion the whole man is active—thought, emotion, and will. Through faith we apprehend the unseen spiritual reality which the sign symbolizes; with the emotions we appreciate what this reality may mean for our lives; with the will we appropriate its benefits and make possible its transforming effects.

In their effort to guard against the abuses of sacramental religion as practised in the Catholic Church, the Reformers, as we have seen, reduced the number of sacraments from seven to two, and surrounded them with various safeguards designed to emphasize their spiritual quality and the necessity of faith for their appropriate reception. There was gain in this, but there was also loss. The restriction of the number of the sacraments and their infrequent celebration has had for many people the effect of separating them from the intimate connection with the common life in which Catholicism had so deeply rooted them. To the Catholic the sacrament is as natural a way of access to God as the Bible to the Protestant. It meets him in connection with each of the greatest experiences of his life: birth, adolescence, marriage, the choice of a profession, death. When a man sins, there is the confessional, opening the door to the sacrament of penance. When death comes and penance is no longer possible, the priest is at hand with the sacrament of extreme unction. Moreover, in addition to the formal sacraments recognized by the church, there is a host of associated acts and objects, the so-called sacramentals,[1] in which the pres-

[1] *E. g.*, the rosary, holy water, the stations of the cross, the scapular, the sign of the cross, the relics of the saints, indulgences, etc.

ence of God in common life is made real to the imagination.

We are beginning to realize that our Puritan fathers carried their reaction against the ceremonial elements in the older religion too far. In the hurry and pressure of modern life we need some outward object to arrest the attention and break the current of our thoughts, and so help us to fix them upon the realities of the spirit. Catholic religion provides the worshipper with a multitude of such helps. To the devout Catholic, as we have seen, the crucifix and the rosary have associations of worship which put one in the mood for prayer. There is nothing in this use of outward symbols to be ashamed of. If body and spirit are as closely related as modern psychology tells us they are, it is reasonable that the senses should make their contribution to worship, and if one, why not all? Eye and hand as well as tongue and ear should do their part. We kneel when we pray; not because there is anything sacrosanct in kneeling, but because it is a way in which the spirit of devotion finds outward expression; and this is true of all the other acts which enter into the ceremonial of worship.

The remedy, then, for the abuses of sacramental religion is not the abandonment of the symbols of the historic church, but the recovery of their true spiritual meaning. As the individual needs some object to arrest his attention, and to help him to realize more vividly than he could otherwise do the unseen spiritual reality through loyalty to which his whole personality is unified, so the church as a whole needs common symbols typifying the historic verities of the faith to make possible that fellowship in prayer which is the ideal of Christian worship.

6. Prayer in the Name of Christ

What is true of the lesser symbols of the Christian religion is true in supreme measure of the central symbol, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Person of Christ is the true Christian sacrament, the meeting-place of the divine and the human—the convincing outward sign of God's inward and spiritual grace. It is to Christ, therefore, that we must go to learn the true spirit and method of Christian prayer.

The word Christ has a triple significance for the prayer life of the Christian. Christ gives definiteness to our thought of God and of God's will for man. He provides us with an object that calls forth in the highest degree our loyalty and our affection. He inspires us to seek an independent life with God for ourselves.

He gives definiteness to our thought of God. We have seen how the conception of God has been changing in the course of the centuries as man's thought of him has been modified by the fresh revelations of the passing years. To Christians the supreme revelation is Jesus. He gives us the symbol through which we can picture most vividly what God is like. When we would realize God's righteousness we contemplate his character; when we would measure God's love we see him hanging on the cross. "He that hath seen me," said Jesus, "hath seen the Father." [1]

So Christ becomes for us the symbol of the forthgoing and revealing God. When we would approach the Father aright, we take his name upon our lips. We clasp his hand as we reach out into the unseen; we use his personality to describe the reality we be-

[1] John 14: 9.

lieve that we find there. When we pray to Christ we invoke the presence of the Christlike God.

But Jesus not only helps us to define our idea of God. He presents us in his own person with an object calling forth our loyalty and affection. He gives us our picture of God, to be sure, but it is a God who comes to us through man. The church has always insisted upon the genuine humanity of Jesus and condemned its denial as the worst of heresies. But the humanity pictured to us in much of the older devotional literature has become to many a modern Christian abstract and unreal. Jesus wears a human body indeed, and speaks with human lips; but his words are not the words of a man, but of the infinite and the eternal. In this transcendent figure, consciously master of nature and of man, we find it difficult to recognize our brother and our example. Modern scholarship has recovered for us the human Jesus. With infinite patience, using every help which research can command, it has reconstructed the environment in which his life was lived—intellectual, economic, political, social, religious. It pictures for us a man of his own time, thinking its thoughts, speaking its language, sharing its experiences—one whom we recognize as flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone; comrade and fellow sufferer as well as Master and Lord.

This conception of Jesus, too, has its contribution to make to our prayer life. In Jesus we see the leader who sets us the task to be performed, the comrade who shares with us the risk and the burden; the friend who imparts to us his innermost thoughts; the lover who died that we, the loved ones, might live. To him we can talk as to a familiar friend, opening up to him our difficulties, revealing our as-

pirations, drawing upon him for sympathy and understanding where other human friends fail.

But Jesus means more even than this for our life. He is not only the symbol that pictures to us what God is like; not only the example that shows us what we may become. He gives us the inspiration that translates faith into sight, hope into achievement. He is the living Christ, who, because he lives, is the perennial source of new life in others.

Greatest of all the things that Jesus does for us is this: that he encourages us to seek an independent life of our own. We bring our life to the test of his spirit, not that we may limit our freedom of approach to God by the literal following of the model he has set, but that through appropriation of his spirit we may enter into a larger liberty. Jesus is God's clearest revelation, but he is not his only revelation. Through him our eyes are opened to the fact that God is everywhere at work, and that every spot on which we tread may be holy ground. Unique as he is, he is the first-born of many brethren. He would be less than he is if he stood alone.

This truth of a continuing revelation through the men and women who have come under Jesus' influence finds expression in Catholicism in the association of the Virgin and the saints with Christ. In our protest against the abuses of this association we have lost sight of the truth of which it is a perversion—the truth that he is "the first-born among many brethren." [1] What repels us in the Catholic conception of sainthood is not the association of the saints with Jesus, but the limitation of sainthood to those whom the church has officially approved, and the puerile actions attributed to many whom it has hon-

[1] Romans 8: 29.

ored. Jesus called his disciples the light of the world and the salt of the earth.[1] He predicted that those who came after him would do greater works than he had done himself.[2] But we look in vain either in his teaching or in his spirit for the restriction by which the church has limited this promise. Sainthood is the monopoly of no age or church. Wherever a man or woman is living in the spirit of Jesus, illustrating his principles, aiming at his goal, bearing his cross, there we have a new channel of communication between God and man. It was a fitting instinct that led the designers of the cathedral of Liverpool to provide a place in their windows for Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling as well as for St. Teresa and St. Catherine. The catalogue of the heroes of faith, we must never forget, is still in the making.

Nor is this wider influence of Christ confined to those who are his followers in name. No fact in recent missionary history is more striking than the appeal of Jesus to men of every race and faith. They may be repelled by the Western form in which our missionary propaganda comes to them. They may have no use for the church that bears his name. But Jesus speaks to something that is universally human. It was through reading the Sermon on the Mount, so Gandhi tells us, that the revelation of passive resistance came to him, which he afterward discovered to be the teaching of his own scriptures.[3] The experiences recorded in that most striking recent contribution to missionary history, "The Christ of the Indian Road," [4] show that in his discovery of the universal appeal of Jesus, Gandhi is not alone.

[1] Matt. 5: 13–14. [2] John 14: 12.

[3] "Mahatma Gandhi," by Romain Rolland, Eng. tr. (New York, 1924), p. 40.

[4] Jones, E. S. (New York, 1925).

This silent influence has been operating so quietly that it is only in the light of some sudden contrast that we appreciate its full significance. At pilgrimage time the roads approaching the Buddhist monastery of Lin Yin, a wonderful old building on a hill some miles outside of the city of Hangchow in China, are lined on both sides for four or five miles with men, women, and children suffering from every form of loathsome disease, who hold out their hands for the tiny coins that are given to them by the pilgrims as they throng to the shrine. The abbot of a neighboring monastery, a man of education and character, was once asked: "Why do you let these people suffer so? Why do you not take them to the hospital and let the doctors cure their diseases?" "Oh," he answered, "that would never do. Kwang-win (the Buddhist goddess of mercy) would be angry. If there were no one to suffer, there would be no one to whom to give alms. How, then, could we worship her?"

In striking contrast to this view of religion is the ideal brought vividly before us by the recent experience of Doctor Albert Schweitzer, a professor of theology at the University of Strassburg, who some years ago surprised his friends by resigning his professorship and going as a missionary to Central Africa. Schweitzer was one of the best-known New Testament scholars of Germany, the author of a widely read book, "The Quest of the Historical Jesus." [1] Besides this, he was a musician of unusual gifts, the author of the greatest "Life of Bach" that has ever been written. Yet he put all this behind him in order to study medicine and fit himself to

[1] Eng. tr. by Montgomery (London, 1910).

be a doctor. The reason for this surprising action he gives in the following words:

"I had read about the physical miseries of the natives in the virgin forests; I had heard about them from missionaries, and the more I thought about it the stranger it seemed to me that we Europeans trouble ourselves so little about the great humanitarian task which offers itself to us in far-off lands. The parable of Dives and Lazarus seemed to me to have been spoken directly to us! We are Dives, for, through the advances of medical science, we now know a great deal about disease and pain, and have innumerable means of fighting them: yet we take as a matter of course the incalculable advantages which this new wealth gives us! Out there in the colonies, however, sits wretched Lazarus, the colored folk, who suffers from illness and pain just as much as we do, nay, much more, and has absolutely no means of fighting them. And just as Dives sinned against the poor man at his gate because for want of thought he never put himself in his place and let his heart and conscience tell him what he ought to do, so do we sin against the poor man at our gate." [1]

So he went out, taking the tools which modern medical science had put into his hands, established his own private hospital, and by his skilful treatment of the sufferers brought healing and consolation to multitudes.

Incidentally, this story shows us the nature of the contribution which science can make to the life of prayer. Throughout all the centuries the disciples of Jesus have been praying the prayer that he taught them: Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done.

[1] Schweitzer, Albert, "On the Edge of the Primeval Forest" (London, 1922), pp. 1, 2.

But the consequences which have followed the praying of the prayer have been different in different ages. Go back in thought five hundred years, or even a hundred, and ask yourself what you could have done then to help answer your prayer. You would find that in principle you could have done little more than the Chinese pilgrims are doing to-day to the poor and the sick on the road to Lin Yin. You could have shared your substance with the needy and visited those who were sick and in prison. But you could not have healed their sickness or put an end to their poverty, or closed the prisons, because you had not learned how. But now we are learning that back of these social ills there are causes which concerted action can help to remove. And so, like Schweitzer, we study medicine, or economics, or penology, till we find the cause that accounts for the trouble and apply the appropriate remedy.

In such ways as these we modern men, using the tools that God our Father has put into our hands through science which is his minister, can work for the answering of our own prayers. But it is still Jesus who inspires the prayer. To us, as to the first disciples, we hear him saying: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these, my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."[1]

All this Christ typifies to the Christian. He is the figure that gives definiteness to our thought of God. He is the historic leader who reveals God's will and commands the loyalty and affection of his followers. He is the creative Spirit who is ever raising up new leaders to meet the needs of each new generation. This many-sided influence explains the hold which

[1] Matt. 25:40.

he has on the affection and loyalty of his disciples and accounts for the fact that through all the changes of the changing generations he has retained his central place in the religion that bears his name.

When we close our prayers with the phrase "In Jesus' name," or "For the sake of Jesus," this does not mean that we appeal to God to do for us for Christ's sake what he would not otherwise do. It means that we desire for our own prayer the same spirit which Christ brought to his. It means that we would think of God as Christ has taught us to think of him; of ourselves in the light of the example he has set; of our fellows in the light of his loving purpose for society. So Christ, interpreting for us the realities with which prayer has to do, becomes the symbol of what prayer at its best may be.

IV

THE CONTRIBUTION OF PHILOSOPHY: PRAYER AS CREATIVITY

1. Suggestions from Philosophy. Prayer as Experiment
2. What Practice Can Contribute to Theory
3. The Principle of Expectancy
4. What Prayer Can Do for the Individual
5. What Prayer Can Do for Society

1. Suggestions from Philosophy. Prayer as Experiment

In the preceding chapter we passed from psychology to history. We reviewed the more important helps which have come to us from the past, and reminded ourselves of the difficulties which often prevent us from making effective use of them. We saw that these difficulties are partly inherent, growing out of the nature of language with its changing meanings; partly personal, due to faults in ourselves which a more resolute will would overcome. We saw that language, whether it be addressed to the ear or to the eye, is a sign pointing to some reality beyond itself, and that the only way to understand the meaning of the sign is to have first-hand experience of the reality to which it points. We pointed out the danger of the sign becoming detached from the object of its reference and living a life of its own, and in this tendency to confuse means and end discovered the roots both of dogmatism and of ritualism. Yet, in spite of this danger, we were led to recognize the indispensable part played by symbols in the life of prayer—both the personal symbols which have individual significance and the historic symbols which help us to visualize the objects of our common faith. We reminded ourselves of the central significance of Jesus Christ, God's supreme revelation, as the historic figure who at once defines for us our thought of God and is the inspiration of ever new insight and consecration for each succeeding generation.

For effective prayer it is not enough to find the right words. One must be assured of the existence of the realities which the words express. Psychology may tell us how the idea of God arises in our minds and the indispensable function which it performs in integrating our personality. History may show us how this idea came to have the content it does, and what are the symbols by which men interpret their experience of the divine to one another. But it is through experience alone that we win our assurance of the reality of the object, and the doubt continues to haunt us whether, in view of all the mistakes men have made in the past, this experience can be trusted.

The bridge by which we pass over from possibility to conviction is faith. We wish to be assured that the bridge will bear the weight we put upon it. For this assurance we must look to philosophy.

We have already had occasion to call attention to the limitations of philosophy in matters of religion. Philosophy can remove particular theoretical difficulties which make it hard for us to believe, but of itself it cannot force conviction. That is the achievement of the whole personality as it meets the invitation of the ideal with inner assent.

But though philosophy cannot take the place of faith, it can make the way of faith easier, and this in two ways. For one thing, it can justify the right of faith to serve as an organ of knowledge. For another it can point out to us the process by which we may judge between conflicting faiths, and so give us a method by which to verify our own.

And first of the right of faith to serve as an organ of knowledge. By faith we designate the process by which we assure ourselves of the reality of our ideals. This process, as we have seen, is known in psychology

as projection. It describes the instinctive tendency of men to attribute objective reality to the things that they value. Faith is the intuition of the whole that gives unity and meaning to its parts.[1] By faith we apprehend the self which inhabits and energizes the body, the personalities with whom we have intercourse and fellowship in society, the transcendent Spirit whose wise and righteous purpose we believe ourselves to discover in nature and in history.

Faith so defined is the characteristic expression of vital religion. Jesus tells us that all things are possible to him who has it.[2] Paul assures us that everything we do is sinful which does not spring from faith.[3] These sweeping statements become less surprising when we remember that faith brings us into contact with the supreme excellence, the reality which satisfies heart and mind alike. "Faith," says the writer to the Hebrews, "is the assurance of things hoped for; the conviction of things not seen." [4] It is that mysterious something in us by which we pass over from doubt to certainty; that makes it possible for us to say: "Now, I am sure."

In the history of religion, faith has often been identified with belief. But such a definition is unduly narrow. Belief is a part of faith, but it is not all of faith or the most important part. Faith is an affair of the whole man—of the affections and of the will as well as of the intellect. It is the response of the whole personality to an object deemed worthy of trust, and it issues inevitably in conduct.

The chief battles of historic theology have been fought over the matter of faith. The Roman Catholic

[1] On the function of intuition as a means of knowledge, *cf.* Montague, W. P., "Ways of Knowing" (London, 1925), pp. 55–68.
[2] Matt. 17 : 20. [3] Romans 14 : 23. [4] Heb. 11 : 1.

Church has identified faith with belief on authority. To the Catholic, faith is the divine grace which enables the Christian to accept as true whatever the church tells him. The function of reason is to establish the credentials of the church, but these once established, the responsibility of the individual ceases. The Reformers turned attention from the credentials of the messenger to the content of the message, and defined faith as the act of the will by which, under the influence of the divine Spirit, the redeemed man accepts the grace of forgiveness freely offered to him in the gospel. But they, too, felt the need of an objective test of the truth of the message, and this test they found in the Bible, the divinely inspired book through which the message comes. To not a few of their successors faith came to mean the same blind trust in what the Bible says or is understood to say that the Catholic gives to the church. Each sect set up its own understanding of the gospel as the only true one, and claimed for it the authentication of God's infallible book. The present divided condition of Protestantism is the direct result of the attempt of Protestants to build a church upon the authoritarian's conception of faith while refusing to draw the consequences which inevitably follow from it. If uniformity of belief is essential to the existence of the church, there can be but one church to decide what men must believe.

In matters of the highest importance, however, we have seen that complete uniformity of belief is neither possible nor desirable. The realities with which faith is concerned—God, the self, other persons—are living, acting, changing from day to day, from moment to moment. This ever-changing ac-

tivity is itself a part of the reality we wish to define, an essential feature of the unity we apprehend by faith.

This does not mean that we do not know God, but that we know him truly only when we recognize in him something that transcends knowledge—something that we feel rather than see, adore rather than define.

The mystics of every age and school have been keenly alive to this ineffable quality in God. They have made it the point of departure both of their theory and of their practice. Faith has meant to them the power of the spirit by which we apprehend that in God which transcends all rational definition, and can be recognized only through the appreciation of love.[1]

In his study of mystical religion, Baron von Hügel records a conversation between St. Catherine of Genoa and her children. In her moments of ecstasy she would cry: "Oh, would I could tell what my heart feels!" And her children would say: "Oh, mother, tell us something of it." And she would answer: "I cannot find words appropriate to so great a love. But this I can say with truth: that if of what my heart feels, one drop were to fall into hell, hell itself would altogether turn into Eternal Life." [2]

To people of practical bent there is something unnatural, almost indecent, in this effusive and extravagant manner of speech. They are inclined to discount the mystical experience as the vagary of sentimentalists, and insist that we must bring re-

[1] On the mystical experience, *cf.* Bennett, C. A., "A Philosophical Study of Mysticism" (New Haven, 1923).

[2] Von Hügel, Friedrich, "The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in St. Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends" (London, 1908), vol. I, p. 159.

ligion down to solid matter of fact. In this they are quite right, if only they will define fact broadly enough and make it include the world of persons as well as of things—of our appreciations and loyalties as well as of our activities.

It may help to clarify our thought at this point if we remind ourselves that religion has no monopoly of faith. Science too rests in the last analysis on faith—faith in the trustworthiness of the universe and of ourselves as interpreters of the universe. Without the conviction outrunning all possible proof that the world without answers to the self within and can be trusted not to play it false, none of the great achievements of our modern civilization would have been possible.

The faith of science differs from the faith of religion, not in its psychological quality as an instrument of knowledge, but in the objects to which it is directed, and the checks by which it is tested. The objects in which the scientist believes are the general principles we call laws, and the method by which he tests the accuracy of his conclusions is repeated experiment. But the hypothesis which the experiment is to test came to him in the first instance by the intuition of faith, and it is faith which supplies the driving power that brings the experiment to pass. The great generalizations of science were first of all simple possibilities. It was faith that translated them into convictions; faith that believed in them enough to act upon them. It is the same with the faith of religion.

There is nothing unreasonable, then, in the method that religion proposes to those who would find God. It is the same method of experiment which science recommends to its disciples. Try God and see. Put

your faith to the test of life and see whether it will not justify your confidence. Step out boldly on the bridge and you will learn whether it will stand the strain.

But suppose there is more than one bridge which may be crossed. Men have believed many things about God in the past. They cannot all be right.

Philosophy can help us here as well. In all the major decisions of life we check the results of our choice by three tests: the test of logical consistency, the test of emotional satisfaction, the test of practical efficiency. These three tests are equally applicable in religion. If God be really what our faith assumes, we shall find him unifying our thinking, satisfying our sense of beauty or of wonder, opening out to us an enlarging and enfranchising life. Piety, we have seen, is unity, and the final proof that we have really found God is that all the discordant elements in our life fall into place and we are at peace.

Only, in so great an experiment, no one man's testing can do for all the rest. Each must try his experiment for himself and verify his results by the experience of all those who have been testing God before him. In the field of religion as in the narrower field of science, the results of the individual must be checked by the results of the group, and ultimately of the race as a whole.

There is a double verification to which our belief in reality must finally submit, whether that reality lie in the field of science or in that of religion: that of universality and that of permanence. The object in which we believe must make its presence evident to others as well as to ourselves; and it must continue to manifest its presence in spite of the changes which the years and the generations bring. Ptolemy

must be checked by Copernicus, and Copernicus by Newton, and Newton by Einstein. All the elaborate paraphernalia of science—its laboratories, its telescopes, its microscopes—are so many devices for enabling this double test to be made.

The realities of religion can be tested neither by microscope nor by telescope, but the principle by which we verify their reality is the same that the other sciences use in their test. If our faith in God is to justify itself, we must be able to show that our experience of God is open to others as well as to ourselves, and that it lasts. History is the laboratory in which this experiment is being carried on. What Isaiah found true about God, and St. Paul and Francis and Luther, must still prove itself true for us to-day. In order to learn whether there be a reality corresponding to our ideal, we must live by our ideal. If we would be assured that there is a God with whom we commune in prayer, we must pray.

2. What Practice Can Contribute to Theory

We may illustrate the enlightening influence of prayer in various ways.

For one thing, prayer can supply the element of reality which is lacking in any purely intellectual conception of God. God, the theologians tell us, is the transcendent, the infinite, the incomprehensible, the ineffable. No words can describe him, no simile can contain him. All our language is only that of children drawing pictures of the surface side of things. But that is no more true of God—though true on an immensely greater scale—than of any other reality of the spirit. It is true of beauty, of

honor, of duty, of the ideal in all its forms. It is true of personality, of friendship, of country, of family. What are all these but words for something that words cannot adequately describe, but only experience reveal? What shall I say of my country? As a boy I describe it in one set of words; as a young man, in another; as an older man, in another still. What America means to me is different from what it means to my friend; what it means to the scholar is different from what it means to the man of affairs; what it means to the banker is different from what it means to the farmer. And yet, no one of us doubts that there is something for which the word America stands, which is real to all of us. When a crisis comes in the national life where a choice must be made between self-indulgence and self-sacrifice, we know, though we cannot fully express, what our country means to us. So God becomes real to us only through personal experience. In prayer we apprehend that which in itself transcends all description; we discriminate the essential from the unessential; and learn that we may know even where we cannot fully understand or describe.

This does not mean, let me repeat, that thought has no function in prayer. On the contrary, as we have seen already, it has a function of the highest importance. It prepares the way for the great experience. It fills it with content when it comes. God means more to the Christian than he can mean to one who knows nothing of the revelation that he has made of himself through Jesus Christ. When life is opening and all things seem possible, the cross means little to us. But when failure comes, and we know what it is to surrender our heart's desire, Calvary takes on a new significance. Then we begin to

understand what Paul meant when he spoke of the cross as wisdom and as power. None the less it is true that the insights for which life's discipline is preparing us do not come to us through thought alone, but only through that total activity of the whole man in which the deep within responds to the deep without, and one becomes able, for the first time, to say with assurance, "I know."

So of that other difficulty already more than once referred to—the difficulty of understanding how the transcendent God can reveal himself to us. This, too, is only one phase of a difficulty which we face at every moment of our lives, and which we overcome by living. How can I understand the workings of nature? There is that invisible power that can carry thought ten thousand miles through the air in a few seconds of time, and make it possible not only to hear but to understand and to feel what is being said and thought and felt at the other end of the globe; that can even reproduce for us on the front page of the morning's newspaper in New York pictures painted by the sun in London. How do we know that these miracles can be performed? Only by experiencing them. And so it is with that greater miracle of God's communication to man, of which prayer is the highest form. Through prayer we experience that which we cannot explain, and solve the mystery of the relation of the finite to the infinite. We do not know how peace, power, and courage come to us. We know only that they come.

Or take that still more perplexing puzzle that in every age has haunted the imagination and baffled the intellect of man—the difficulty of reconciling the reign of law as assumed by science with the freedom and initiative which are the life-breath of per-

sonality. We have already spoken of the difficulty caused by the subjectivity of our prayer states, the possibility that the pictures which they paint for us may be simply dream pictures, illusions which, by auto-suggestion, to use the cant word of the moment, we ourselves create to deceive ourselves. But the very form in which the difficulty is stated suggests the needed answer. In prayer we experience genuine creation; new values arise and new appreciations of old values. Granted that we ourselves are the creators of these values and of these appreciations, who is it that made us what we are? Say that we are but the channel through which the mysterious river we call nature pours its unfathomable waters, what is nature that it should produce this result and no other? *Ex niliho nihil fit.* Only value can create value; only meaning, meaning; and value and meaning have their home only in personality. So the principle of self-causality which is evoked to dispense with the necessity of God is changed from an enemy into a friend. In prayer we become aware of God at work, and solve the mystery of the relation of personality and law.

Once more, through prayer, we discover the true meaning of the supernatural—a conception which presents all but insuperable difficulties to many of our contemporaries. To affirm the supernatural is simply to express in another way what we have been saying: that God is not exhausted in anything that he has done, but that there are limitless resources of wisdom and power ready to be drawn upon by the man who approaches him in faith.

There is a conception of the supernatural which seems to many to contradict the fundamental assumption of modern science—that of the universal-

ity of law. According to this view a miracle, if not a violation of natural law, is at least an exception to it, and as such, something of which science, whose one concern is with law, can take no account. "A miracle," says Thomas Aquinas—and in this definition he has been followed by most Protestant theologians—"is something that goes beyond the power of all created nature, something that God alone can do." [1]

But there is another aspect of the supernatural, as religious people believe themselves to have experienced it, to which this definition fails to do justice, and that is the discovery of meaning. The miracles of religion are not simply wonders, but signs. They cause surprise, to be sure, but at the same time they shed light. They illumine what would otherwise be dark and bring hope where before there was despair. They are like the sign of Jonah to which our Lord referred,[2] the preaching at which the people of Nineveh repented, or like the works of mercy and healing to which he pointed the disciples of John the Baptist for proof of his divine mission.[3]

Such miracles still continue, and they are the one convincing proof of the existence of God. We believe in the supernatural not because we can prove that long ago certain extraordinary events took place for which there have been no later parallels, but because we find in the world to-day events and experiences which irresistibly suggest a mind that plans and a will that acts. Whatever in life calls forth wonder and surprise—the discovery of beauty in nature, the sense of honor in persons, the occurrence of crises in history—all the arresting experiences that

[1] *Summa*, part I, qu. 105, art. 6, 8; 110, art 4.
[2] Luke 11:32.
[3] Matt. 11:2–6.

have captured the imagination of man and made him feel that he is not the only spirit at work in the universe—all these are just as much a part of the real world as the elements into which science analyzes them, or the uses which industry makes of them. Not to realize this and to make place for it in one's philosophy is to lose sight of the central fact of life. When we are engaged in the work of dissection we are carried along by our interest in the process we are analyzing. But when the dissection is over, we too often feel that something has dropped out—a perfume, a thrill, a reverence, a loyalty. It is in these, not in any logical argument, that we find our convincing proof of the divine.[1]

[1] The Roman Catholic Church deserves credit for its emphasis upon the continuity of the supernatural. One can sympathize with Baron von Hügel when, in a recent essay on "Christianity and the Supernatural" (in "Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion" (London, 1921), p. 281) he voices his conviction that "be the sins of commission or of omission, chargeable against the Roman Catholic authorities, or people, what they may, in that faith and practice is found a massiveness of the supernatural, a sense of the world invisible, of God as the soul's true home, such as exists elsewhere more in fragments and approximations and intermittently." The difficulty which Protestants find with the Catholic view of the supernatural is not the fact that wherever Catholics turn they see God, but because so many of the events to which Catholics point as evidence of God's presence seem to them puerile and undivine. In their reaction against what seemed to them the superstitions of Roman piety, the Reformers restricted miracles to the great channels of historic revelation—the Bible and the person of Christ. They found their convincing proof of God's present activity in the central experiences of personal religion—experiences like regeneration, sanctification, repentance, and the like; experiences which involve transformation of character. Baron von Hügel himself recognizes the importance of this moral element in the supernatural. He discovers the presence of the wonder-working God in other religions than Christianity and relies for his proof of the continuance of miracles on the experience of men and women in our own day who have given signal evidence of courage, purity, compassion, humility, truthfulness, self-devotion, and joy.

On the subject of the supernatural *cf.* my essay, "The Permanent Significance of Miracle for Religion," *Harvard Theological Review*, July 1915, pp. 298–322.

3. The Principle of Expectancy

If, then, prayer is to mean to us what it should, we must be expectant in our attitude toward God. We must prove in our own persons the truth of the third of the three principles with which we began—that God is truly found in the present only when it is realized that he cannot be completely contained in the present. God, I repeat, is greater than any of his revelations or all of them combined. No experience which we have had of him is so complete that it will not need to be enlarged by later experience; no disclosure which he may vouchsafe but is meant to lead us on to fuller knowledge.

We say that we believe this, but how seldom we act on our belief. We speak of God as personal, but too often God's personality means to us an intellectual belief rather than a practical relationship. If we really believed that God were creative Spirit, the belief would transform our lives. We should accept each experience that comes to us not as ultimate, but as a door opening into a new and larger world. We should never forget that everything that we see is only a part of something greater. Into every experience of life, even the darkest and the most forbidding, we should carry the attitude of expectancy which believes all things possible. We should trust the God who is ever at work in the world to make all things new.

There are many reasons why we lack the faith which alone makes effective prayer possible. It may be that we think we already know all about God that needs to be known. We have grown up in an environment where unquestioning acceptance of the beliefs of the past has been regarded as a mark

of true religion, and we have taken over the standards we have inherited as a matter of course. Or, it may be that we have had some first-hand experience of God which has brought us reassurance and happiness, and we have been living on the memory of it ever since. Our thoughts turn back to what God has already said to us rather than forward to what he may still have to say. Often, however, our difficulty is of the opposite kind. It may be that we have reacted against the identification of faith with authority so far as to regard any acceptance of an unverified hypothesis as illegitimate. The questioning habit has grown upon us until any decisive commitment has become psychologically impossible. We think of faith as a wall shutting us in to the conclusions of the past, rather than as a portal opening the way to new knowledge.

All these failures have a common root—a too narrow conception of God. One man makes permanence his test of the divine; another, change. The fundamentalist thinks of God as revealing himself once for all and shuns novelty as undivine. The modernist regards God as the spirit of progress, and in his anticipation of future discovery makes little of the insights already gained. Each tries to confine God within too narrow a compass, and, satisfied with the glimpses already vouchsafed him, loses the larger vision. Whether we put God's revelation in the past or in the future matters little, provided we limit him to what we have found there. God is not only the God of the past, but also of the future. He can be the God of the future only as he is already the God of the past. If God be God at all, he must be the God of all life—past, present, and future. The more eagerly we anticipate what he may still have to dis-

close, the more alert we should be to discover the marks of his presence to-day. For it is only as we perceive God working here and now that we shall be able to recognize him when we meet him further along the way. So all experience will become to us

> ". . . an arch wherethro'
> Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever when [we] move." [1]

It is a significant fact that when so many religious people are losing their mood of expectancy and trying to confine their faith in set formulas which have the definiteness of scientific propositions, scientists are recovering the attitude of anticipation which religion has lost. Characteristic of the modern scientist's attitude toward nature is a sense of its exhaustless possibilities and the determination to avail himself of them to the uttermost. He finds it easy to have faith because so many things have come to pass which once seemed impossible. It is scientists rather than churchmen who to-day are taking Jesus seriously when he said: "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." [2] Not one of the achievements of modern science but is the result of some man's daring to believe that that could be done which his fellows had declared to be impossible.

What is true of our thought of the physical universe is becoming true also of our thought of human nature. The incentive to psychological research is the conviction, held by different schools of modern psychology, that human nature can be improved. Human nature is subject to law indeed, as physical

[1] Tennyson, Alfred, "Poetical Works" (Boston 1898), p. 88.
[2] Matt. 19 : 26.

nature is subject to law; but law, as we have seen, whether inner or outer, is not a barrier to progress but the condition which makes it possible.

It is this sense of boundless possibilities in man which justifies our faith in personal immortality. If here and now we see human nature in process of re-creation, it is because man carries within him possibilities which this life alone cannot exhaust. Why then should it be unreasonable to expect that when this chapter of our history has been finished a new page will be turned on which God will write the history of new experiences and of new achievements?

In the light of this conception both of man and of God we must approach the vexed question of petition in prayer. Whether our prayers are answered in the way our fathers believed they were answered, this is certain: that if we believe in God at all we shall go on asking. For not to ask God for what our hearts most desire would be to limit the freedom of our approach to him and, what is more serious, the freedom of his approach to us. How God draws near to us and in what myriad ways his providence shapes our lives and the lives of those we bring to him in prayer we may never completely know. It may be that the determinists are right when they tell us that everything that happens is implicit in what has gone before. It may be that the believers in contingency are right when they tell us that in the realm of personality we meet creativity pure and simple, beginnings that are not only relatively but absolutely new. Of this we may be sure: that if there be a God who has made man in his own image, he will find ways of making himself known to the man whom he has made.[1]

[1] *Cf.* Burton, E. D., "Why I Believe in Praying" (University of Chicago Press, 1924).

4. What Prayer Can Do for the Individual

Prayer, so defined, is not a luxury which one may use if one will, but with which one may dispense without loss. Prayer is the most serious business in life. It is the way in which we define for ourselves the final issues and relate ourselves to the ultimate reality. If we have found it hard to realize what an unspeakable privilege it is, it is because we have not yet seen it in this light; we have not yet measured the possibilities it holds in store both for the individual and for society.

I have chosen the word possibilities rather than consequences to emphasize the element of personal responsibility. Prayer, we have seen, is an adventure of faith by which we realize our true nature through contact with a reality greater than ourselves. Through prayer we rise above the obstacles that limit our freedom. For prayer delivers us from the two great enemies of freedom—doubt and fear.

There are two kinds of freedom. There is the freedom of irresponsibility, of thoughtlessness—the freedom of the man who follows the impulse of the moment; who says: "I will do as I please because I please to do so." Many people have no other idea of freedom than this. They yield readily to the first appeal that comes to them because they have made no irrevocable decision that commits them to one course of action rather than another.

But it takes only a little experience to show us that freedom of this kind is illusory. We are not the only factors to be considered in the universe. Other influences play upon us, physical and spiritual, with which we have constantly to reckon. There is the realm of physical forces that we call nature. There

is the world of our fellow men. And there is an undiscovered man within ourselves of whom we have to take account even in the very moments when we suppose ourselves to be most free. These alien forces without and within hamper and thwart us in a thousand ways. When we would do this, they block the door; when we would have this, they say us nay. If we are to be free in the sense of realizing our heart's desire, we must somehow come to terms with them. So we learn, sometimes quickly, sometimes by a slow and painful process, that there is no true liberty in isolation, but that we become free only as we enter into relation with some reality greater than ourselves, some reality able to control and to transform all that impedes and opposes us.

But the more we realize our limitations the more we are tempted to doubt whether such a reality exists and such a relationship is possible, and the more mature we grow, the wider our experience becomes, the more clearly we perceive the intricate relationships of life, the more deeply we enter into its limitations and taste its sorrows, the more acute and poignant this doubt becomes.

Now there is only one way in which we can be delivered from this doubt, and that is through the practice of prayer. Prayer is the method by which we assure ourselves that there is really such a God as faith asserts. It corresponds in the realm of religion to that extraordinary power in ordinary life by which a man recognizes other persons and knows that they are spiritual realities like himself. How do I know that my friend exists, or my son, or my wife? How do I know that they are worthy of the love and trust I repose in them? I do not reach this conviction by logic. There is no mathematical demonstra-

tion by which I can prove to myself that back of that mass of colors and movement I call a face, there lives and loves and yearns and aspires a spirit like my own, in whom I do well to put my trust. And yet there is nothing of which I am more sure, for I have lived out my trust and find that it did not fail me. So prayer is the activity of the whole man by which we lay hold upon the unseen spiritual reality by which we are encompassed and make it our own.

Mrs. Sidney Webb, in the illuminating autobiography in which she tells the story of her spiritual experience,[1] describes a crisis through which she passed at her mother's death. This bereavement, coming upon her suddenly, forced her to consider for herself the ultimate problems of life. "It stamped, by a new experience," she says, "the conviction which had been slowly growing from the first dawning of conscious thought within me, a conviction that the world was either an infernal chaos, or that all life was a manifestation of goodness; and death, disease, and misery horrible only to our imperfect vision. . . . Either 'the all' is so inexpressibly sad that there is no room for an increase of sadness through personal affliction; or else there is a mysterious meaning which, if we could divine it, and accept it, would hallow all things, and give even to death and misery a holiness which would be akin to happiness." [2] She came to hold the faith—instinctively at first, but afterward with increasing clarity—"that it is by prayer, by communion with an all-pervading spiritual force, that the soul of man discovers the purpose or goal of human endeavor, as distinguished from the means or

[1] Reprinted in part in *The Survey*, Feb. 1, 1926, p. 553 *seq.*
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 577.

process by which human beings may attain their ends." [1]

"Thus the long-drawn-out controversy, between the Ego that affirms and the Ego that denies the validity of religious mysticism, ended not in a reversion to the creed of Christianity, not even in an affirmation by the intellect of the existence of a spiritual power with whom man could enter into communion, but in an intuitive use of prayer, as, for one of my temperament, essential to the right conduct of life." [2]

Later reflection enabled her to justify this practice intellectually. At first it was enough to record the fact that during the ten years intervening between her mother's death (1882; æt. 24) and her marriage (1892; æt. 34)—crucial years during which she "acquired the craft of a social investigator, experienced intense emotional strain and persisted in continuous intellectual toil under adverse circumstances—it was the habit of prayer which enabled [her] to survive, and to emerge relatively sound in body and sane in mind." [3]

In the end prayer banishes doubt. To be sure, this banishment does not take place all at once, or once for all. To most of us, as to Mrs. Webb, it is a gradual process in which each new doubt is met as it arises and put to flight, and faith grows little by little into a settled habit of the life.

With faith comes also victory over the second great enemy of man—fear; the fear of what may happen in the future, for now the future is seen to belong to God, and wherever we may go he will go too, and we shall find him there before us. No one has expressed this sense of God's perpetual presence

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 578. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 578. [3] *Op. cit.*, p. 578.

more vividly and convincingly than the prophets and psalmists of Israel. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." [1]

That is as true, yes, far more true, of the vast universe that modern science has disclosed to us than of the narrower world which bounded the vision of the psalmist.

> "I know not where His islands lift
> Their fronded palms in air;
> I only know I cannot drift
> Beyond His love and care." [2]

This does not mean that we can escape suffering. It is as true of life to-day as it has ever been that with its joy it brings us pain. But it does mean that the effect of suffering is changed. It is no longer something to be shunned, but to be used. It becomes the raw material of character, an experience through which we enter into the companionship of God.

What is true of our attitude toward nature is true also of our attitude toward our fellow men. I suppose there is no fear which is more pervasive than the fear of man. I do not mean simply the fear of

[1] Ps. 139: 7–12.
[2] Whittier, J. G., "Poetical Works" (New York, 1892), pp. 230, 231.

what men may do to us in the way of positive injury, though for multitudes of people that is real enough; but the fear of what people may say, of what they may think. We are the slaves of public opinion. We dare not call our souls our own. But prayer delivers us from this fear. It makes us independent of man, and this in two ways: knowing God, we become indifferent to what men say or think about us. More than this, knowing God, we discover something in men which we had not as yet suspected, something which changes our mood of repulsion into one of sympathy.

Above all, we shall be delivered from fear of ourselves, fear of our own inner weakness, of that law in our members which the Apostle Paul calls the law of sin. There are two ways of dealing with the problem of moral evil: the way of law and the way of faith. We may try to work out our salvation by struggle and effort, step by step, and fight by fight; or we may move into a new environment in which unsuspected allies are discovered and undreamed of powers released. This new attitude is faith, and it functions through prayer.

Finally, by prayer we are delivered from the worst fear of all—the fear of death. This is the last and deadliest of all the fears, the fear of which the apostle spoke when he said that the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.[1] Death, the foe of all that is bright and sunny and cheerful; not physical death simply, that ends the life of the body; but the death of the spirit we call failure, in ourselves and in others; the fear of the failure of God's plan for his world, of the defeat of righteousness, the going out, one by one, in the night of despair, of the stars by which

[1] I Cor. 15:26.

we have steered our course. It was this fear against which Christ battled in the garden and from which he emerged victorious with his faith re-established in the ultimate triumph of God's will.

5. What Prayer Can Do for Society

Prayer, then, is the way we win the victory over the two chief enemies of the soul—doubt and fear—and become for the first time truly free.

With freedom, prayer brings all other good gifts in its train: happiness, strength, courage, sympathy, health. What prayer will do for each of us no one can tell in detail, for each man's life is a problem by itself, different from the life of every other man. But we know what prayer has done for others who have practised in their own lives the principles of which we have been speaking. Here is one testimony from an English churchman:[1]

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in thy presence will prevail to make—
What heavy burdens from our bosom take,
What parched grounds revive, as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower:
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear;
We kneel how weak; we rise how full of power!

Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong;
That we are ever overborne with care;
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy, and strength, and courage, are with thee?"

[1] Trench, R. C., "Poems" (New York, 1856), p. 134.

"Or others"—that is the significant word of this prayer. I come to God not simply for myself, but for my fellows—for all I touch in the familiar contacts of life—my family, my friends, my neighbors and acquaintances; the members of my congregation, my students, my associates in business—all the great company, known and unknown, who are bound to me by the mysterious cords of life—that I may receive from God something that will be for their good.

Jesus—who had most to say of our need of solitude in prayer—is our authority for its social function. The God he came to reveal is the Father of many brethren. Even when the door is shut and the world barred out, we still address him in the plural, not the singular. Not "My Father," we say, but "Our Father." No one who has studied in the school of Jesus can possibly think of prayer as a selfish exercise. When Walter Rauschenbusch wrote his "Prayers of the Social Awakening" he was simply giving a modern interpretation of what has always been the genius of Christian prayer.

In an autobiographical fragment found among his private papers after his death, General Samuel Chapman Armstrong wrote these words about prayer:

"Prayer is the greatest thing in the world. It keeps us near to God—my own prayer has been most weak, wavering, inconstant; yet has been the best thing I have ever done." [1]

"Prayer," he writes again, "is a mystery; but this we do know, that looking back upon our lives and remembering what we have asked for, we can say that all the real good we have asked for has been

[1] Talbot, E. A., "Samuel Chapman Armstrong" (New York, 1904), p. 300.

granted. When Christ repeated 'And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son,' he spoke as the holy and pure One whose 'whatsoever' could not refer to all sorts of things, for that would be absurd, but to the whole range of heavenly gifts which he doubtless will give away to those who ask aright, but in his good time and in a way that we may not discern till long after the gift." [1]

In writing this, General Armstrong doubtless had in mind the inner graces which have so largely engaged our thought hitherto, but these graces in his own case had by-products which found their embodiment in bricks and mortar, property and land, and the lives of men. To one who wishes to know what the prayer of faith can do in these modern days, a week at Hampton Institute is to be commended, for Hampton is in a very literal sense of the term the answer to prayer.

This is but one example of many that could be given. When I was at Atlanta some years ago I heard the story of the last days of John J. Eagan, a Southern man of business who tried to take Christ seriously. Mr. Eagan was active in many business concerns: president of the American Cast Iron Pipe Company, chairman of the Federal Council's Commission on Race Relations, leader in many of the philanthropic and benevolent enterprises in his native city. I met him first fourteen years ago when he had come into prominence as the leader of a movement to drive commercialized vice out of Atlanta, a movement remarkable for this: that when the houses were closed, the Christian women of Atlanta took the women who had been dispossessed into their homes and kept

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 297.

them until honest work could be found for them. Since then Mr. Eagan had been dealing with one vexed question after another—the question of race, for example, that for reasons we can easily understand presents so many difficulties to Christian people in the South. Last of all he faced the question of his own business. He had been using his profits in a Christian way, but how about the way in which the profits were made? He began to study his factory as a human enterprise, not abstractly, but in the lives of the men and women, black and white, who were working for him. He went into their homes and he found out how they lived. The details of the story are given in an article in *The Survey* by his friend Marion Jackson.[1] It is enough here to record the fact that in his will, with the counsel and approval of his wife, he gave the entire common stock of his company to the members of the board of managers and the board of operatives in trust for their fellow workers and for those who should buy pipe from the company.

The will closed with these words which sum up the life purpose of this remarkable man: "To insure service, both to the public and to labor, on the basis of the Golden Rule given us by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." [2]

That was the outward side of John J. Eagan's life. But we do not penetrate to its real secret until we discover that it was a life that found the spring of its activity in the daily practice of prayer. There was no act of his life over which he did not pray, and no decision that he did not make in the light that

[1] Jackson, Marion M., "The Kingdom of God in a Foundry," *The Survey*, December 1, 1924, p. 255 *seq.*

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 298.

came to him from his personal communication with God. When he decided to surrender the control of the company of which he was president to a board in which the workmen should have direct representation, he drew up a little balance-sheet of assets and liabilities—the obstacles he would have to face and the helps on which he could rely to overcome them. After his death his widow found it among his papers. On the top of the right-hand column—the "asset" column—was the word "God."

One more illustration may be added, this time from another country. In his remarkable book "The Christ of the Indian Road," Mr. Stanley Jones gives an interesting bit of autobiography. Facing the appeal of educated Hindus for a presentation of Christ adapted to their special needs he became painfully conscious that he was not prepared, either intellectually or religiously, for the strain that his new work would impose. More than this, he was physically broken.

"I saw," he writes, "that unless I got help from somewhere I would have to give up my missionary career, go back to America, and go to work on a farm to try to regain my health. It was one of my darkest hours. At that time I was in a meeting at Lucknow. While in prayer, not particularly thinking about myself, a Voice seemed to say, 'Are you yourself ready for this work to which I have called you?' I replied: 'No, Lord, I am done for. I have reached the end of my rope.' The Voice replied, 'If you will turn that over to me and not worry about it, I will take care of it.' I quickly answered, 'Lord, I close the bargain right here.' A great peace settled into my heart and pervaded me. I knew it was done! Life—abundant Life—had taken possession of me.

I was so lifted up that I scarcely touched the road as I quietly walked home that night. Every inch was holy ground. For days after that I hardly knew I had a body. I went through the days, working all day and far into the night, and came down to bed-time wondering why in the world I should ever go to bed at all, for there was not the slightest trace of tiredness of any kind. I seemed possessed by Life and Peace and Rest—by Christ himself.

"The question came as to whether I should tell this. I shrank from it, but felt I should—and did. After that it was sink or swim before everybody. But nine of the most strenuous years of my life have gone by since then, and the old trouble has never returned, and I have never had such health. I seemed to have tapped new Life for body, mind, and spirit. Life was on a permanently higher level. And I have done nothing but take it." [1]

It is the modern version of an old story. Prayer has been the source from which the men who have taken religion seriously have drawn their strength. "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me," said Paul.[2] "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." [3] These are not theoretical statements written by a theologian for theologians. They are records of the personal experience of one of the most practical men that ever lived. Jesus went further still when he said to his disciples as they faced one of the most serious of moral difficulties: "With men this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible." [4]

There are many reasons which explain why people do not take our Christianity more seriously, and

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 19, 20.
[2] Phil. 4: 13.
[3] Phil. 4: 11.
[4] Mat. 19: 26.

many of them are good reasons. But the weightiest of all is the contrast between the words we speak and the things we mean. If our lives were the radiant, world-conquering, transforming and recreative thing life was to Wesley and Luther and Francis and St. Paul and the Master himself, men would take us more seriously than they do. And it is prayer which can make it so.

Like all the best gifts of life, prayer was not given to us for ourselves alone. We go into the closet and shut the door that we may be alone with God, only to find that those whom we had shut out, he has let in. As he unveils his heart to us in the solitude we call prayer, we discover that it is tenanted by those whom we thought we had left behind. Our family is there and our friends; our neighbors and our fellow citizens, and with them, others whose presence surprises us still more: those who irritate us and whom we dislike, our enemies and ill-users, those who revile and persecute and despise us; they are all present in the heart of God, and as we see them there, we find our attitude toward them changing. We see them as we see ourselves, weak and sinful men and women, who, differing in all else, alike need God's forgiveness and are subject to his laws.

We lose the true significance of intercessory prayer if we think of it as the means by which we bring to God those for whom we should pray. Rather it is God's means of revealing to us what he desires for others, so that we can pray for them aright.

So the paradox of the individual and the social gospel finds its solution in the experience of prayer, and we go back from the closet to the church and to the world to face the tasks that meet us there with new courage and with new hope.

V

THE CONTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION: PRAYER AS DISCIPLINE

1. Prayer as a Training School of Character
2. What Protestants Can Learn from Catholics
3. What the Church Can Do to Cultivate the Life of Prayer
4. What Each of Us Must Do for Himself

1. Prayer as a Training School of Character

In previous chapters we considered the various obstacles which make prayer difficult for our generation, and saw what science, which is in large part responsible for their existence, can do to minimize if not to remove them. We studied the contribution of psychology to the life of prayer and showed how it justifies the central place we give to prayer as an appreciation of the supreme values. We studied the contribution of history. Reviewing the helps to prayer which have come down to us from the past, we saw how, rightly used, they enlarge our fellowship and deepen our sympathy. We studied the contribution of philosophy. We saw that it vindicates the right of faith as an organ of knowledge, and shows how prayer, which is the language of faith, releases new energies and helps to recreate character.

One final difficulty remains to be dealt with. We have referred to it already more than once, but its importance is so great that we must linger on it a little longer. If we are to master the art of prayer, we must feel it important enough to make the sacrifices that mastery requires, but many people—even many religious people—have not yet come to realize what such mastery costs, or made the initial act of consecration which it requires. It is the church's responsibility, through education, to make this realization easier and, when the will has chosen, to furnish the discipline which will make the choice effective.

The Catholic Church long ago recognized this difficulty and made provision for it in its own way.

The life of prayer, the church taught, was the ideal life for all men, but not every one could be expected to realize the importance of this life sufficiently to give himself up to it utterly. To secure the complete consecration needed, special conditions must be provided to make the realization of the ideal possible. So with the approval of the church the hermit turned his back upon society and made his home in the desert; and as life grew more complex and the number of the religious multiplied, the monastery and the nunnery took the place of the cell of the solitary. While other men were working and fighting and dancing and sleeping, the prayers of the saints were rising to God, who had made men not simply for happiness but for perfection.

The Reformers rejected this sharp distinction between the religious and the secular life. Sainthood, they were convinced, was the prerogative of no special group or class, but the universal duty, let us say rather the universal privilege, of Christians. They taught that we do not need to leave our place in society and go out into the desert in order to find God. We can find him where Jesus found him: where need is greatest and men throng most thickly. It was not in the wilderness where his predecessor, John the Baptist, conducted his ministry, but on Calvary, a hill overlooking a great city and in the midst of thronging multitudes, that our Lord made the great act of sacrifice on which the world's hope of salvation rests.

This new sense of the sacredness of the secular dignified sides of life which had hitherto been little esteemed. Not only the knight and the monk, but the artisan and the trader, were seen to be servants of God and builders of his kingdom. Business, once

despised, became respectable, and the virtues of thrift and self-control which Protestantism inculcated led to the building up among large numbers of people of the accumulated wealth which we know as capital. An English economist, R. H. Tawney, has told the story of this unexpected by-product of Protestantism in a fascinating book called "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism." [1]

But the more the reformed religion fostered the moral virtues of thrift and self-control, the more successful and comfortable men became, the harder it was for them to realize the need of God which had driven men into the monasteries. In Protestantism, as in Catholicism, prayer tended to become perfunctory—a habit taken over from the past, not a vital need in the present. To cultivate the prayer life with more intensity, therefore, earnest men and women adopted new methods adapted to the new conditions.

The most original, and in many respects the most instructive, of the reforming movements was that of the Friends. They broke completely with the ceremonial of the church and substituted a simpler and more unconventional form of worship. They rediscovered the spiritual uses of silence. The Friends not only found that it is possible for the individual to realize the presence of God without the aid of the conventional symbols of historic religion; they have shown that silence may have social uses as the impulse to pray which each worshipper feels in himself is reinforced by the knowledge that others are praying by his side.

A different method of cultivating the devotional life was used by the Methodists. Wesley and his

[1] New York, 1926.

little company of the Friends of Holiness, following the lead already given by the pietists of Germany, insisted that salvation, to be complete, must show itself in the life. They therefore met in groups for self-examination under a leader, and the practice was afterward extended to the society as a whole. To be saved, as they understood it, was not merely to have one's own sins forgiven, but to receive new power for right living, and to turn this newly acquired power to social uses. Wesley showed that there is nothing which helps to convince a man of the reality of the spiritual life so effectively as contact with some one else who has found God. He would have every Christian become an evangelist. The rescue mission owes its inspiration to him, and the Salvation Army is a modern application of his principles.

In the Anglo-Catholic movement we find men returning to the older models. Anglo-Catholics believe that there are values in the Roman Catholic form of worship which have been lost by the present generation of Protestants. While discarding the superstitions with which Roman Catholic piety has often been associated, they are trying to restore to the worship of the English-speaking church many of the practices which the Reformers had abandoned—such as the mass, the reservation of the sacrament, and the confessional. For the more earnest spirits they provide orders for the intensive cultivation of the devotional life; for those who must live their lives in the world, a service of unusual beauty, in which all the arts are called upon to minister to the spirit of worship.

These different movements have this in common: that they emphasize the element of discipline in the

Christian life. They set up a standard of living which is meant to mark the difference between the true Christian and those who are so only in name; and to this end they insist upon the practice of personal devotion which experience shows to be essential to the attainment of Christian character.

2. What Protestants Can Learn from Catholics

The Roman Catholic Church, as we have seen, makes provision for the discipline of the devotional life in two ways: first of all, by the rules of the different orders with their vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience; secondly, by providing for ordinary Christians who do not expect themselves to become religious in the technical sense, a director or confessor who is to be their guide in the devotional life. The ideal of the discipline in each case is the same—to wean the will from the things of sense and time and to center it upon God as the supreme object of desire—but the method which is followed differs in the extent of the sacrifice which is expected and the nature of the helps which are provided.

The most notable single book on the devotional life by a Roman Catholic is the "Spiritual Exercises" of Ignatius Loyola,[1] that remarkable Spaniard who, more than any other man, checked the onward sweep of the Reformation and held half of Europe to its allegiance to the Pope. The weapon with which he accomplished this extraordinary feat was not the sword, but a treatise on prayer.

The "Spiritual Exercises" is a series of meditations on various topics connected with the Christian

[1] *Op. cit.*

life. It covers four weeks and deals with such subjects as sin, salvation, the crucifixion, and the resurrection. It is designed to help the person who takes the exercises to visualize the subjects of his contemplation in such a way that he will draw from them appropriate consequences for his daily life, and be led to submit himself without reserve to the church which is Christ's rightful representative. In the case of countless thousands this result has actually been attained.

When we study the "Exercises" with care we begin to understand how this miracle was wrought. Under unfamiliar forms the sympathetic reader will discern the application of educational principles, the full significance of which our modern teachers are just beginning to appreciate. We may mention the recognition of the part that interest must play in commanding attention, the use of specific and concrete situations to illustrate abstract truths, the insistence that man's primary duty is the reconstruction of life and that methods of prayer are only secondary, the principle of concentration, the recognition of the effect of body upon mind, the use of repetition with a fresh context, the conviction that human nature can be changed. All these familiar principles of the new education underlie the method of the "Spiritual Exercises." But they are associated with a conception of God so foreign to our thinking, an attitude toward the church so different from our own, an ideal of piety so self-centred and morbid, as to repel rather than attract. In Ignatius the difficulties which the ordinary Protestant feels with Catholic piety meet us in accentuated degree. Religion is sharply separated from the rest of life, and is defined in negative rather than positive terms. The

symbolic language of the Bible is taken literally and God is represented as punishing men with physical torments in a physical hell. Christ is presented as a king assembling his armies to fight against his enemies gathered under Lucifer, their chief. Subjection to the church which is Christ's representative and bride becomes, therefore, the supreme duty and the final test of the good life. Private judgment must be completely surrendered. "To arrive at the truth in all things, we ought always to be ready to believe that which seems to us white is black, if the hierarchical church so defines it." [1] The effect of such a presentation, even upon a sympathetic Protestant, cannot but be repellent. We feel that there must be something in Catholic piety simpler and more universal in its appeal. We wish for some other interpreter to take us within the inner court and give us an insight into its mysteries.

Such a sympathetic interpreter many Protestants will find in St. Francis de Sales, whose "Introduction to a Devout Life," [2] composed in 1618, has remained to this day one of the most popular books among students of the life of prayer. In this book he suggests a method of meditation[3] which lends itself to use by others than Catholics, as may be seen from the following adaptation prepared by a Protestant teacher for the use of his students: [4]

First Step—Preparation.
Let the imagination be active.
Place yourself in the presence of God.
Affirm that since God is everywhere, he is now here;

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 199. [2] Eng. tr. by Barns (London, 1906).
[3] Pp. 83–104.
[4] President Ozora S. Davis, for use in the Thorndike Hilton Memorial

and you are in the very atmosphere of his nearness, like a flying bird in the air.

Think of Christ, "whom not having seen ye love," as now in this Chapel sharing your experience, although unseen, as once he lived with men.

Offer a brief prayer of confession and petition, imploring guidance in the moments of meditation to follow.

Propose a subject, making it as specific and vivid as possible. Imagine it as connected with some definite action or part of your experience.

Second Step—Consideration.

Let the mental powers be active.

Entertain all possible considerations of the subject proposed, in order to make it clear and convincing to the mind. Seek solid reasons for the proposition, assured that the religious life may be based on facts and logical conclusions.

Go from point to point in the consideration without hurry or fatigue. Proceed only so far as time and a composed mind will permit.

Third Step—Resolution.

Let the feelings and the will be active.

The reasons reached in the consideration should stimulate the affections, since we must love better what is more fully known.

Reduce general considerations, thus warmed by the emotions, to the form of definite duties to be presented to the will for acceptance.

Resolve firmly and reverently, "I will now undertake to build up my life upon that which I have considered and which has been clarified in my meditation."

Fourth Step—Conclusion.

Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the new truth discerned and the new resolution registered.

Offer a prayer of consecration to the practical duties and the enlarged life involved in the resolution.

Offer a prayer for grace and strength to keep steadfastly in the way of duty until the resolution is fully carried out.

> Then, as one who has been walking in a garden of flowers gathers a few to take with him, select a truth or an impression and carry it in memory for the day.

Those who wish to penetrate further into the genius of Catholic piety will find guidance in the work of a later Salesian who a few years ago wrote in French for his own use a treatise on "The Interior Life." He submitted this manuscript to Father Tissot, the Superior General of the order, who authorized its publication. It has recently been made accessible to English readers in a translation by W. H. Mitchell.[1]

"The Interior Life" is a commentary on a single paragraph of the "Spiritual Exercises"—that which deals with the foundation, or, in other words, the brief introductory paragraph in which Ignatius sets forth the philosophy which underlies his entire conception of the devotional life. The book is divided into three parts, which deal successively with the End, the Way, and the Means. The End is the realizing of man's true life in God through perpetual growth in grace, which leads to the possession of holiness. The Way is obedience to the will of God, both the declared will which is known to us through the formal teachings of the church, and the secret will which is made known to each individual through the leadings of Providence. The Means are the various practices of devotion which the church prescribes: penance, the sacraments, prayer in its various forms. These are useful, indispensable indeed, but only when they are seen in relation to the End and the Way, and freely embraced for the greater good they make possible. To make them ends in themselves is

[1] London, 1913.

the most fatal of errors. The last thing in the world our author desires to do is to propose a new devotional method. Principles alone, he tells us, are the foundation; method is merely an accessory. As a guide to the principles of the devotional life, therefore, he desires his book to be judged. Its attractive style, rigorous logic, and warm devotional spirit combine to make it peculiarly instructive to the Protestant who desires a fuller understanding of the genius of Catholic prayer. He who wishes an introduction to Catholic piety at its best will do well to master this book.

The author of "The Interior Life," with all the classical Catholic writers, recognizes that the discipline which the church requires is quite consistent with a recognition of God's presence in nature and the right of the Christian to make use, under proper conditions and restrictions, of the pleasures that come to us through the common store of beauty and helpfulness which nature puts at his disposal. It is not the use of the common things of life that is wrong, nor the joy that we take in them; but the fact that we think of them too often as ends in themselves, and do not use them as they were meant to be used —as helps to our realization of the presence of God.

This attitude toward natural pleasures is a commonplace in Catholic teaching. It is not so generally recognized by Protestants that according to the Catholic view a similar restriction applies to the supernatural gifts of God. These, too, are not ends in themselves, but means to a greater end; namely, the immediate presence of God. This is true of all forms of supernatural religion. It is true of the sacraments, of the priesthood, of the church itself. They are means, not ends; sign-posts pointing to some-

thing greater—helps which we use for training for a life of freedom in which we can dispense with them all and walk in the clear light that shines from the face of God.[1]

"In creating me for himself," writes the author of "The Interior Life," "God manifests to me the essential love which he has for himself. . . . But his work of creation was also for the love of me, and thus it is that he has made all things for my happiness. . . . God intends me to find, even in this world, a host of satisfactions in my life's progress toward him, in my acquisition of the being which constitutes my temporal existence; and finally, in eternity, the one, infinite, ultimate, complete repose of my whole being, which is called salvation. Happiness in this world, happiness in the next, this, too, is my end. . . . (God) wishes himself to be the life of my life, the soul of my soul, the all of my being: he wishes to glorify himself in me and to beatify me in himself. . . ." [2]

The ideal of the devotional life which inspired this passage has proved too exalted for realization on a large scale. The church which in theory should be the witness to God's presence everywhere in life has too often become the sole means of access to him; and the life of prayer, which should flow as simply and naturally as a brook, has stereotyped itself in a multitude of artificial and unnatural practices in which the unity and simplicity of the devotional life are lost.

Mr. Wilfred Ward, a well-known English Roman Catholic,[3] was once asked by a Protestant friend to suggest a book from which he could learn the genius

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 23, *seq.*
[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 13, 14.
[3] A former editor of *The Dublin Review.*

of Catholic piety. He recommended the life of Père Lacordaire, by Father Chocarne.[1] Lacordaire was a great French preacher of the nineteenth century whose sermons held multitudes spellbound, and who was never more moving than when he described the sufferings of Christ. In his book Father Chocarne tells of the process by which Lacordaire used to prepare himself to preach. He tried by every conceivable device to reproduce in himself the conditions of Jesus' suffering. He practised flagellation and other bodily torture. He would lie on the ground and call upon a young priest, his companion, to revile him and call him all manner of opprobrious names, in order that he might share in some measure the shame that was heaped upon his Master.[2]

There is something repellent to the normal man in this description of an artificially imposed suffering. Discipline is indeed necessary in the Christian life, and suffering may be God's teacher to bring us to him. But the discipline which is to make religion real should come to us in more normal ways. We need not fear but in the natural course of his Providence God will send us all the suffering we need without our seeking artificially to create it for ourselves.

Certainly this was Jesus' experience. He did not seek suffering. On the contrary, he shrank from it and prayed to be delivered from it. Calvary was not something that came to him out of a clear sky. It grew naturally out of the conflict of ideals and purposes in which his life was involved. He saw the conflict coming, and avoided it as long as he honor-

[1] Chocarne, B., "Inner Life of the Very Reverend Père Lacordaire," Eng. tr. (London, 1907).
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 321 *seq.*

ably could. "If it be possible," he said, "let this cup pass from me. . . ." When at last the cup came he recognized it as his Father's will and accepted it with submission.

What was true of the Master should be true of the disciple. We shall find our way to God most surely not by running away from the familiar duties and contacts which our life holds and substituting others which we devise for ourselves, but by seeing the old duties in their true meaning and in their larger relations. One does not need to enter a monastery to cultivate the spirit of devotion. Even to the most heedless, life brings experiences which reveal the need of prayer.

A recent article in *The Atlantic Monthly*[1] describes the experience of a group of climbers caught at nightfall in a dangerous situation from which they could neither advance nor retreat. One of their number, a young mother, used the hours of waiting in writing to her son a letter, from which I extract these sentences:

"I know you would be praying, Boy, if you knew. I've been talking to Father and he has been reading to us out of the Testament he carries. Billie, there *has* to be a God. We mortals are too weak, in physical and moral and spiritual strength, to cope with this." [2]

Even more insistent is the call to prayer that comes through the need of others. We have seen how this motive operated in the case of General Armstrong when, after the war, he asked himself what he could do to help the race he had fought to free. We have seen how it operated in the case of Mrs. Sidney Webb

[1] Williams, A. L., "The Brink," November, 1926, pp. 583–8.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 585.

when, with the enthusiasm of youth, she threw herself into the struggle for industrial justice that was characteristic of the closing quarter of the last century. How much stronger is the appeal to-day when the Great War has revealed to us the intimate ties that bind the whole world together and the immeasurable consequences which may follow for human life from a single misstep! There is not one of all the countless social problems of our age but is a challenge to the life of prayer.

Sex, industry, race, politics, international relationships—all these alike, with their revelation of the possibilities of disaster stored up for the world in the untamed forces of human nature, point us back of the things we do and the tools we use to the inner springs that feed character. Each is a summons to the discipline of prayer.

3. What the Church Can Do to Cultivate the Life of Prayer

When one recalls the central place held by prayer in the religious life and the unbroken practice of devout Christians through the centuries, the failure of our Protestant churches to make adequate provision for instruction in this all-important subject is surprising. Apart from the three movements already referred to, the Protestant churches have been content for the most part to live on the momentum of the past. They have taken prayer for granted as something that would come of itself and concentrated on other aspects of the Christian life—on belief, for example, or on conduct. Even in Methodism, which in its early days made such a notable contribution to personal piety, little is now being done to

initiate the rising generation into the secret of prayer.

This lack of systematic training appears both in the education of the ministry and of the laity. In a notable address at the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Longfellow, President Eliot of Harvard University characterized the man of poetic genius as with one exception the greatest single benefactor of mankind. That exception was the man who had the power to lift his fellows to God in public prayer.

This unexampled service it is the privilege of the minister of religion to render. Yet when we ask what is being done to train him for this high office, it is not too much to say that there is no single subject of comparable importance for which until recently such inadequate provision was made in the instruction of our theological schools. With a few notable exceptions, chiefly in the Episcopal and Lutheran schools, the subject was ordinarily dismissed with a few lectures in some course connected with the department of practical theology; while apart from daily chapel, a brief service usually conducted by the faculty, little was done for the systematic cultivation of the devotional life.

The minister's lack of training is reflected in his congregation. The chief means of educating people in the life of prayer is the church service itself, and the service depends largely for its effect upon the spirit of the priest or minister who conducts it. If, therefore, these leaders have had little training in the practice of prayer, we cannot expect to find their people any more proficient.

I do not propose here to discuss at any length the conduct of public worship. That is a subject so important and so difficult as to require a treatise of its own. It is enough to say that the principles which

we have found helpful in our study of personal devotion should control the conduct of public worship. In both cases we begin with an act of the will. The minister must realize the cardinal importance of what he is doing and be willing to submit to whatever discipline is necessary. A friend once asked Doctor Henry van Dyke if it was not hard to preach. "No," he said, "it is not hard to preach; but it is very hard to bring oneself to the mood where one is fit to preach." The same may be said with even greater truth of preparation for public prayer.

There is, however, one difference between our private and our public worship which creates a special problem about which a few words may be added. In a single congregation persons of different ages, different antecedents, and different degrees of spiritual and intellectual maturity are present. From this it follows that if public worship is to be effective the service must be at once more formal and more leisurely than need be the case with an hour of private devotion.

It must be more formal, for without some familiarity with what is to be expected, few worshippers will be sufficiently at home in what is done to feel that the service in which they are participants is really theirs; it must be more leisurely because the minds of a group always move more slowly than the mind of an individual. There must be time for each part of the service to be grasped by the simpler minds in the congregation, and this means that the minister ought to speak more slowly and make provision for longer pauses than is now ordinarily the case.

One of the advantages of a liturgical service is that it lends itself to this treatment. The difficulty with

the so-called long prayer is not simply that it makes heavy demands upon the one who makes it, but that it makes still heavier demands upon those who listen to it. This difficulty the liturgy removes. The service consists of a number of different units, most of them short. The prayers are brief, each dealing with a single theme complete in itself, and the people are given frequent opportunity to join in response. Knowing what to expect, they can make the necessary inward preparation for intelligent participation in the service.

Many Protestants brought up in the practice of free prayer feel repelled by a liturgy. But it is not the use of the liturgy so much as its required use that causes the difficulty. To use words that have come down to us from the past because we feel that we must, may often dry up the springs of devotion and render true prayer impossible. But when we wish to pray and find prepared for us by masters of the English tongue words that concisely and beautifully express the permanent needs of the soul—prayers that have been tested over and over again by countless multitudes of worshippers, and have brought to one generation after another a fresh sense of the nearness and helpfulness of God—we naturally will desire to use them. There are dangers in the use of the historic prayers—the danger of formality, the danger of insincerity. But the use of so-called free prayer is exposed to equal if not greater perils—the perils of carelessness, of slovenliness, of irreverence; not least of the unconscious acceptance of a form of our own which is none the less a form because we are not aware of its existence.

Fortunately, things are changing for the better. The reviving interest in prayer to which attention

has already been called is showing itself among other things in a renewed consciousness of the importance of public worship. In 1904 the Northern Presbyterians adopted a new Book of Common Worship which has done much to improve the quality of their church service. The Disciples have recently inaugurated a movement for quickening the spiritual life which has taken as one of its specific aims the study of possible ways of improving public worship.[1] In Congregational circles men like Dean Sperry[2] and Von Ogden Vogt[3] have been directing the attention of their fellow Christians to the problem of worship and have made suggestions which, if carried out, would greatly improve matters. In all the churches standards of taste are changing for the better. The last two decades have witnessed a marked improvement, both in the character of church architecture and in the quality of church music.

In general we may say that the tendency in the non-liturgical churches is to make wider use of liturgy and to recognize in increasing degree the ministry which art may make to religion. In the liturgical churches, on the other hand, the tendency is toward greater freedom. This appears both in the simplification and shortening of the present service and in the provision for alternative services of less formal and more varied character. Some of the most effective of these have been collected in a little pamphlet called "Acts of Devotion,"[4] the use of which has been authorized in many of the dioceses of Great Britain.

[1] The Church Life Foundation, a voluntary organization established in January, 1925.
[2] Sperry, W. L., "Reality in Worship" (New York, 1925).
[3] Vogt, Von Ogden, "Art and Religion" (New Haven, 1921).
[4] Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, London, 1921.

This new interest in worship shows itself in the field of study and of teaching, as well as of practical experiment. The Congregational Board of Education is printing and distributing helpful devotional literature and in other ways fostering the life of prayer. The Religious Education Association has made worship central in its recent discussions.[1] The helps provided by the Federal Council for the common use of the different communions are appealing to a constantly growing public. The seminaries, too, are coming to feel their responsibility in the matter. In some schools students are being encouraged to take part in the chapel service. Courses on prayer are given where none were offered a few years ago. A leading mid-Western seminary has just erected a little chapel of singular beauty, holding not more than fifty persons, which is especially designed for the cultivation of the more intimate aspects of the devotional life. Plans are being made for a similar chapel in the building programme of an Eastern seminary.

But when all allowance has been made for what is being done, it is but little compared with what still needs to be done. The time would seem to be ripe for a comprehensive survey of the whole field, embracing both the seminary and the church, and having for its aim a comprehensive programme for education in worship which would be available for the guidance of those who desire to enter upon this important field.

Such a programme should include provision for training both in private and public worship. It should be based upon the best results of modern

[1] *E. g., Religious Education*, "Symposium on Worship," October, 1925, pp. 380–393.

psychological study and should furnish a literature as adapted to the devotional needs of the average Protestant of to-day as the books which the Catholic Church puts in the hands of its young people. This literature should discuss such subjects as the place of worship in life, its basis in the nature of man, the conditions of effective prayer, and the effects which it can produce both in individual and social life. It should pay special attention to the relation of religion to health and use the latest results both of medical and of theological science to guard our young people against the quacks of both professions who are trying to prey upon them.

Provision should also be made for the study of the history and use of the great liturgies, Roman and Protestant, as well as of the meaning of the doctrines they assume and the ideals they inculcate. As long as we pray by ourselves, any language will do, but concerted prayer, to be effective, requires the historic sense. We must not only be at home in the speech that is native to us; we must master the language of those who have prayed before us.

We have already shown how a better understanding of the nature of language helps to clear away the difficulties which prevent many from finding help in the use of the older liturgies. We need to carry this study further. Our survey should show what widely different forms of worship have existed side by side and what each has to contribute if intelligently and conscientiously used. It should interpret Catholic worship to Protestants and Protestant worship to Catholics, and both to the Friends; in the hope that with better understanding may come deeper sympathy, and with deeper sympathy closer contact, and with closer contact inward unity, which

in God's good time will find appropriate outward expression.

In an article on the recent Stockholm Conference,[1] Professor Heiler, one of the delegates from Germany, gives his personal impressions of the conference. Many things seemed to him interesting and important, but the most notable impression produced on him was the revelation of Christian unity which came to him in the service of common worship.

Prayer, to be sure, was not the primary purpose which brought us together at Stockholm. We came to face our social tasks and to discuss ways and means in which they could best be discharged. But the more we visualized these tasks in all their reach and breadth, the problems of race and of industry, of vice and of crime, of individual selfishness and of national ambition—the more we became conscious of the inadequacy of our own resources and came to feel our need of God. So the hours of worship for which provision had been made on the programme came to mean more and more to us, and the spectacle of all this company of Christians, so different in faith and polity and habits of worship, transcending the barriers which had hitherto separated them and joining in united prayer and praise, made us feel as never before the limitless possibilities of service in a church that was really one.

What happened at Stockholm must happen to Christians everywhere if the church is to realize its divine ideal. We have tried to argue ourselves into unity, only to find ourselves hopelessly at variance. Common service has brought us nearer together, but barriers still remain which we have not yet been able to surmount. One way still remains to

[1] *Die Christliche Welt*, October, 1925, p. 867.

be tried: the method of common worship. When we have learned to pray together, not merely as separate individuals but as a corporate body, we shall have taken the most important single step toward recovering for the church that consciousness of a divine mission which alone can fit it to be an effective interpreter of the mind of Christ to a world in need.

Finally, we must make place in our programme for a study of whatever in contemporary life may minister to the spirit of prayer—the longings and aspirations which find expression outside the church as well as within, and which affect in many subtle ways, that we feel even though we do not understand, the currents of life that are flowing within ourselves.

Such a study will make heavy demands upon patience and sympathy. It will not be easy for those who are conservatives to understand the spirit that animates many of their younger contemporaries, or to feel at home in their speech. They will miss the note of authority, the note of dignity, the note of reverence. Yet who that knows the facts can doubt that under these unfamiliar forms the spirit of worship is often present? We need men like Walter Rauschenbusch to interpret to us the religious motives that inspire the radicals, with their red flag and their revolutionary language, and to write for us new prayers of the social awakening. In the great chorus of confession and praise that is rising to God, voices of every type must join—radical and conservative, old and young, churchmen and those who for conscience' sake have broken with the church.

With study must go experiment—experiment not only designed to improve our existing methods of worship, but to devise new methods to meet new

needs. Our present morning service, as we have seen, contains too many different elements. It should be made shorter and more concentrated. Where the main purpose of the service is instruction, ample time should be given to the sermon, and the time given to scripture, prayer, and hymns should be correspondingly shortened. But there is an increasing number of persons who feel their need of a service of worship pure and simple, and for this, too, provision should be made at such time and in such way as may best meet the need of the particular group for whom it is designed. There is no inherent sanctity in the hour of eleven. If early morning and late evening be convenient times for the worship of the individual, why may they not prove suitable for common worship? The custom followed in many of our churches of attaching the communion to the end of a long service, in which other interests are prominent, has serious disadvantages. The communion should be celebrated more frequently, and, whenever possible, by itself. Many besides Episcopalians will find the observance of early communion helpful, but where this is not practicable, an afternoon service will often be found effective.

Apart from the more formal church service there is a rich field for experiment in corporate worship. The old prayer-meeting has gone, or is going, and we have as yet put nothing in its place. Various possibilities suggest themselves which may well be explored. Our Catholic fellow Christians make large use of the retreat. They bring together groups of persons in some convenient place where they can engage in common meditation or prayer under suitable direction. Why should not Protestants follow this example, and so recover for their own people

the spiritual refreshment and rejuvenation which many Catholics, Roman and Anglican, testify have come to them in this way? The Friends, as we have seen, have made large use of corporate silence, a practice for which there is a sound psychological basis. Other Christians may wisely follow their example. An experiment of this kind is described in a recent book called "The Fellowship of Silence." [1] In a little Anglican church in Australia a group of Anglicans and Friends met together at stated periods for silent worship, to the extraordinary spiritual profit of all who participated. Corporate silence is being used in some Congregational churches as a preparation for the communion service.[2] The audience gather at a stated time before the service in order that they may prepare their spirits through private meditation for the common act of commemoration in which they are all presently to take part.

A further field invites us—into which it is impossible for us to enter here—the whole field of the relation of the senses to religion. What contribution to the spirit of worship can art make—whether in its plastic form as architecture, or in its more intimate and illusive form as music? How can symbol be used in our Protestant churches in ways that are congenial to our historic tradition and consistent with our spiritual ideal? Such questions could be indefinitely multiplied. One feels that one is standing on the fringe of an unexplored territory, fertile with possibilities of stimulus and inspiration.

[1] Hepher, Cyril, ed. (New York, 1915).
[2] *E. g.*, the Central Congregational Church in New Haven.

4. What Each of Us Must Do for Himself

Thus far we have been considering the church's responsibility for cultivating the spirit of prayer and providing adequate facilities for giving that spirit corporate expression. That responsibility is great, but it is limited. The church can provide an opportunity for worship. What he will do with this opportunity, each must decide for himself. To master the secret of effective prayer, *one must cultivate the will to pray.* One must *desire* what prayer has to give so much that one is willing to surrender whatever stands in the way.

Let us suppose that this decision has been made. We have faced the challenge of need either in our own lives or in the life of others. We have caught the vision of the thing we would like to be. We have felt the thrill of the thing we would like to do and the desire has been born in us to make of our lives the very utmost that is possible. How can we retain this first enthusiasm? What can we do to change our prayer from a series of unrelated impulses into an organized habit of life?

In a previous chapter[1] we reviewed what the experience of the past can teach us about the principles of effective prayer. In spite of the differences which divide Catholic and Protestant, we discovered certain general methods of approach which have characterized the experience of those to whom prayer has been a reality. We saw that since prayer is communion with God, the most important thing is to free ourselves from engrossment with our immediate practical interests and to give ourselves up to the leading of the Spirit, whatever that leading

[1] Pp. 48–56.

may be. This does not mean that we are to empty our minds of all thought; on the contrary, we found that meditation is one of the most potent helps to effective prayer—indeed that it may itself become prayer in one of its highest manifestations; but only that our attitude must be one of complete surrender and receptivity. Most fatal of all the obstacles to prayer is anxiety, with its resulting strain. All the other principles that we considered—the principles of regularity, of variation, of inclusiveness, and of concentration—were only devices for bringing about this essential result. It remains in conclusion to make some practical suggestions as to how these principles can be applied in our own lives.

First of all, *we must begin where we are.* We must be absolutely honest and frank in what we do, and, what is quite as important, in what we think and in what we feel. It is futile to represent ourselves as other than we are. We may deceive others. We may deceive ourselves for a time. We cannot deceive God.

This seems a very simple and obvious thing to say, but it has practical consequences of far-reaching importance. For one thing, it bears directly upon the intellectual difficulties which keep many from praying. They do not pray, not because there is not something in them that reaches out to that which is without and above, but because they do not believe in the kind of God to whom other people are praying. But God is not a schoolmaster who sets us a copy that we must reproduce letter by letter. He will not judge us according to the correctness of our thought about him, but according to the sincerity of our feeling and the singleness of our purpose. If we find difficulty with the personality of God, let us

make earnest with whatever ultimate reality we do believe in; the thing we value most, whatever it be —the sense of duty, or of honor, or of beauty. Horace Bushnell's first creed was a very short creed indeed: "It is always right to do right." [1] If we can say no more than this, let us say this; but let us say it in all sincerity. Let us live with our best whatever it be, giving ourselves up to it utterly, holding nothing back.

What is true of our thought life is true also of our affections and of our desires. We should not pray for what other people love and long for, but for what we ourselves in our heart of hearts most desire. And if we do not know what this is, let us make that fact the starting-point of our prayer. Let us ask God to teach us to know ourselves; to show us the meaning of the unreconciled desires that are struggling in us for mastery. Let us be as frank and unashamed as the Psalmist was when he prayed to Jehovah. If what we want is not best for us, God will show us that in due time. But he can do nothing for us if we are not sincere.

It is essential that we should take some time every day to be alone. The question when to take it, each must decide for himself. Books will give information as to the methods which other men have found helpful—some that are suggestive have been listed in the Bibliography—but the experience of others cannot settle the question for us. Each of us, I repeat, must decide for himself what his time of prayer shall be—whether it shall be morning or evening, or some time snatched from the pressure of the day's work. I know a man who makes it his practice to

[1] "Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell," ed. by Cheney (New York, 1880), pp. 57, 58.

use his hours in the railway for prayer. He looks into the faces of the men and women who are his fellow passengers and tries to imagine how they must seem to the eye of God. And he tells me that he has found the practice wonderfully helpful. But whether it be morning, or evening, or high noon, let us stop long enough to exchange the attitude of the actor for that of the observer, of the critic for that of the worshipper. Let us realize that we are in a world full of wonderful and ennobling things, and yield ourselves up to the contemplation of them.

Again, each must decide for himself how to use the time thus set apart. There is no rule which is best for everybody, but if the experience of the race is any guide, it is best for almost everybody to have a rule. Unless you have a rule, you cannot even have the satisfaction of departing from it. Without a standard, change loses its meaning.

Here again we shall find help in other men's experience. The books of Fosdick[1] and Orchard[2] are fruitful of suggestion. Glenn Clark's "daily dozen" will prove helpful to many,[3] though some may miss from his technique the full recognition of the ministry

[1] Fosdick, H. E., "Meaning of Prayer" (New York, 1915).

[2] Orchard, W. E., "Devotional Companion."

[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 168–172. Professor Clark finds an analogy between the principles which underlie Walter Camp's philosophy of physical exercise and the principles which he has found helpful in prayer. These principles are three:

1. Expand the mind and take in all of God. This corresponds to the stretching of the body which sets the blood circulating;

2. Pray out the bad and pray in the good. This corresponds to the principle of deep breathing which expels the impurities of the system and renews the supply of oxygen;

3. Keep the prayer thought as a continuing force through the day. This corresponds to the regularity upon which Camp insists.

In explaining the method in which he has applied these principles to his own prayer life, Professor Clark is careful to warn his readers against considering his method as a rule rather than as a series of suggestions to be modified as the experience of the individual may suggest.

of suffering which was so central a feature in the experience of the great apostle, and of our Lord himself. Healthy-minded religion is a satisfactory religion for healthy-minded people, but as long as there are sin-sick and storm-tossed souls in the world, something different and more profound will be needed for them.

The question how long to pray is another vexed question which each must decide for himself. The important thing is to see that the time is there so that we are free to use it. One cannot pray profitably in church if the sexton stands by one's side with the keys in his hand, reminding one that it is time to close. And the sextons of our modern world are legion. Morning and evening are the best times for prayer for most people, for the very simple and obvious reason that they are the only times that most people can completely command. A friend of mine had in his congregation a motorman, who left home for his day's work at three o'clock every morning. This man once confided to his pastor the fact that the hour of his day he most enjoyed was the half-hour he spent in prayer before he started for his work.

One suggestion that many have found personally helpful is that of concentrating on a single subject of prayer. Most of us, I am persuaded, try to pray for too many things at a time. We do not linger long enough on any of them to make our prayer really profitable. Doctor Orchard suggests a modern substitute for the canonical hours of prayer which many will find appealing.[1] He would have us set apart five seasons each day for prayer: the first, as we awake to consciousness and realize anew that we are living in a world in which God is the cen-

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 63–68.

tral fact; then, after we are dressed but before we plunge into the business of the day, a prayer for guidance in the day's duties and consecration to its tasks; at noon comes the hour of the Angelus, that momentary pause in the day's duties that the Catholic Church recommends and Millet has immortalized in his unforgettable picture. This would seem the very time to commend to God the great social causes in which we are engaged. Why not stop ourselves and send up our prayer for God's blessing on those who are working for social justice, race friendship, and a warless world? When evening comes it brings with it the time for self-examination with its confession of sin and prayer for forgiveness, and this is a natural time to remember before God the friends and dear ones who, like ourselves, have been subject to the day's testing and need our Father's love. Last of all, as we drop off to sleep, a last word of self-commitment to the Watching Eye that will be guarding us while we sleep.

We should always have on hand some good reading that will turn our thought to the things of the spirit and suggest subjects for meditation. Best of all, of course, is the Bible. We can never know this great book till we have prayed our way through it. Critical study of the Bible has its place, the more critical the better; but criticism is no substitute for sympathy. The world is waiting for teachers who will help us to appreciate the Bible for what it is—the great manual of the devotional life—and to bring to its interpretation that best of commentaries, which is prayer. When we can find a book that can minister to the spirit of prayer better than the Bible, it will be time to dethrone it from its central place in our devotions.

But though the Bible is the best book of devotion, it is not the only book. Any book that tells the story of God's self-revelation in nature and in history, and of man's response to that revelation in worship, may be a devotional book. J. H. Oldham, the editor of *The International Journal of Missions*, has recently published a "Devotional Diary"[1] in which he has printed extracts from books which he has found personally helpful in his own spiritual life. It is instructive to see from what varied sources he has drawn his inspiration. One could render no more useful service than to follow this example and to record for the benefit of others the undiscovered possibilities for the devotional life which are contained in books we have been accustomed to classify as secular.

In our meditation we should, so far as possible, concentrate on principles. There is no greater enemy of the devotional life than slipshod and careless habits of thought. Catholic prayer is effective most of all for this: that there is a consistent theory underlying it. It is not meant that we should try to make our theory of prayer normative for other people, but it is meant that we should make it normative for ourselves. When we think about God, let us think systematically; taking up one by one the permanent elements that have entered into man's experience of him through the ages—the experience of his mystery, of his power, of his wisdom, of his righteousness, of his love—that we may realize, as far as is humanly possible for us to do so, what they mean for us and for the world in which we are living. Or we may take up, one by one, the graces of the Christian character as the gospels and epistles bring

[1] New York, 1926.

them before us; or the vices with which they are contrasted. Or we may follow the life of our Lord through the gospels, or that of the Apostle Paul as he has recorded it for us in his letters, trying to draw from each event or experience in the record the lesson which it suggests for our own lives. The Bible, if only we train ourselves to use it, is an exhaustless reservoir of such themes for fruitful meditation—subjects directly applicable to the life of to-day. Take such a Psalm as the 104th—the story of what one man found in nature; or the 51st, the experience of a man alone with God; or the 139th, that marvellous revelation of the encompassing presence. What modern words can ever thrill us as these classical expressions of perennial human experience?

So far as possible we should apply what we read to our own life, but not in any meticulous or pedantic fashion. One of the wisest chapters of that wise book, "The Interior Life," is the one in which the author deals with self-examination. He calls it "The Glance." [1] "Do not try to go over in detail all the things you have done or left undone during the day," he says in effect. "It is not what you have done that matters, but the spirit in which you have done it. Ask yourself what has been the *tone* of the day's living. Has it been a good day, or a bad day? Has its tendency been upward, or downward?" It will not take you long to find this out. A "glance" will do the work.

We have seen that all life is a preparation for prayer; at least it may be made so, since it is the scene of God's constant activity. This leads to a further suggestion. So far as possible we should

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 307–9.

consciously relate what goes on during the day to our prayer life in the narrower sense, but this, too, we should do in a natural and unforced way, in keeping with the principles of receptivity and objectivity. We should not try to *solve* our life's problems in our moments of prayer. Rather we should take them to God and leave them with him. The solution will come to us by and by in God's own good time.

And what is true of our personal needs and problems is true also of the friends we love and the causes with which we are identified. We should take them with us into our hours of prayer—but not as burdens we must carry ourselves or problems we must solve by ourselves; rather as aspects of the life we are living with God on which we expect light to break from the leading of his Spirit.

We should take our problems and tasks to God in prayer. But we should never forget that there is another side of prayer which is even more fundamental: that of rest in God. Let us think hard while we think, and as honestly as we can, but when we have come to the limit of our power and our thought can go no further, let us stop thinking and yield ourselves up to the joy of God's presence. Let us work hard while we work, and as effectively as we can, but when we have come to the end of our strength and can do no more, let us stop working and watch God at work. Let us cast all our care on him who careth for us, confident that in his good time he will give us light and peace.

In the last analysis it comes to this: either there is a God or there is not; either we are alone in the universe, facing its unsolved mysteries and its appalling tragedies with only the help that comes from

other mortals as ignorant and as helpless as we, or there is Some One who hears when we speak and can answer when we call.

In prayer we put this supreme issue to the test. Prayer introduces us to the Great Companion who meets our human need with his divine response. The man who has learned to pray is no longer alone in the universe. He is living in his Father's house.

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2. Forms of Worship
3. Collections of Prayers
4. The Cultivation of the Devotional Life
5. Biographical Material
6. The Life of Prayer in a World of Science

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